VOLUME II

CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Berean Bible Basics

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CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENT COURSE
Volume II

Berean Bible Basics

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DEDICATED

In memory and honor of the couple who gave
me my lovely Christian wife, Gayle E. (Davis) Coon.

LEE ROY DAVIS

September 11, 1914—December 13, 1953

VERNON M. DAVIS WHEAT

October 4, 1921—

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FOREWORD

This book is long overdue. The author, Crawford Coon, a noted camp meeting teacher and preacher, has poured years of extensive study and research into its pages. It is a must for the young convert and the seasoned Christian alike, as it covers in detail the initial conversion experience and provides a detailed guide to Christian living in plain, easy-to-understand language.

To know the author personally and also to read this book, has been a rich and a rewarding experience for me.

After more than fifty years of research, I have never found a study guide to be more accurate scripturally or more helpful than this book.

Every Christian, young and old alike, should have and become familiar with this book. It has been a blessing to me.

O. C. Crabtree, Superintendent
Florida District
United Pentecostal Church International

PREFACE

Paul and Silas, due to an uprising caused by the Jews, were sent out of the city of Thessalonica by their brethren. Traveling to Berea, approximately sixty miles away, they entered a synagogue of the Jews. The Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word of God readily, searching the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:1-14).

From this account in the Bible, one who receives the Word with readiness of mind and searches the Scripture has become known as a Berean. As Christians we too should be more noble than those of Thessalonica who rejected God's men and message.

Many honorable citizens of Berea, both men and women, upon searching the Scripture believed the teachings of Paul and Silas. Sopater, a convert from Berea, accompanied Paul into Asia on a missionary trip (Acts 20:4).

My desire is that you too will become a modern-day Berean, readily receiving, searching, and believing God's Word. Volume II of this *Christian Development Course* is designed with this view in mind.

Each lesson contains a worksheet consisting of twenty questions. These are to be used as a self-test or given to you and graded by your instructor to gauge your comprehension.

True nobility finds its greatest expression in those who search out God's Word for the purpose of obeying and propagating it. *Berean Bible Basics* is a study in basic truths, designed to make you more noble.

God bless you for your interest in His Word! Rewards await you both now and hereafter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book is the product of many things and many people—never the work of one person. Without these multiple facets and staff at work this book, too, would have been impossible. Honor is therefore given to some very special people who rendered invaluable assistance in the publication of this second volume.

Sandra Hudson, my secretary and a computer buff who entered all this data into the computer, thus making it legible to you, deserves special recognition. Her countless hours of work and input into this work are deeply appreciated.

Gladys Willis, my former high school English teacher with thirty-three years of teaching experience, again served as editor of this volume as well as Volume I. Debra McLendon, Susan Morace, and Charlene Collins, all members of our church congregation and employees of the local school system, also served as editors.

Glenda Jenkins, manager of Impress Printing who designed the binder cover, has been a loyal friend and supporter. Tracy Fairbanks of Impress Printing spent countless hours in design work and production of the final manuscript. All the employees of Impress Printing have been superb with the first printing.

Thanks to each of you—without you Volume II of this *Christian Development Course* would not have been published.

LESSON 1

NOTES:

SO GREAT SALVATION

HEBREWS 2:1-4

Salvation embodies many facets, terms, and elements, all contained and explained in the Scriptures. Our need to be saved becomes evident when we study the creation and fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. Their fall into sin and expulsion from the Garden of Eden plunged the human race and all succeeding generations into sin.

Sin's consequences demand a Savior for all mankind. Ages have come and gone, yet God's plan for each age failed to deal effectively with the sin problem. However, when Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, came, He once and for all brought deliverance from sin to the human race.

The writer of Hebrews used the adjective *great* to describe the salvation that Jesus Christ came to bring us. He also warned us that there is no escape if we neglect this salvation that was introduced by Jesus Christ and then confirmed to us by those who heard Him. Christ's present-day disciples are still confirming this great salvation as it is presented in the Word of God. Any other gospel introduced in any generation will automatically cause the person or angel to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).

DEFINITION

Both the Old and New Testament employ the term *salvation* in a variety of applications and meanings. Since an understanding of the full meaning of this word is important, we need to define our subject fully.

1. **Yeshuwah** (yesh-oo'-aw) is a Hebrew word meaning something saved, deliverance, aid, victory, prosperity, health, and help. An extension of *yeshuwah* includes the words *yasha* (yaw-shah'), meaning to be open, wide or free, to be saved and *yesha* (yay'-shah), meaning liberty, deliverance, prosperity, and safety.

2. **Soteria** (so-tay'-ree-ah) is a Greek word that indicates safety, health, deliverance, and salvation. *Soteria* comes from the root word *sozo* (sode'-zo), which means to save, deliver, protect, heal, preserve, or be whole. *Soter* (so-tare') means a deliverer.

3. **Salvation** (Webster): "1. The act of saving or being saved; preservation from

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destruction; rescue. 2. In theology, the redemption of man from the bondage of sin and liability to eternal death; the saving of the soul through the atonement of Jesus."

From these definitions it is evident that salvation can include deliverance from:

A. Afflictions (II Timothy 3:11; Acts 7:9-10).
B. Temptation (II Peter 2:9).
C. Evil (II Timothy 4:18; Matthew 6:13).
D. Physical Harm (II Peter 2:7).
E. Bondage (Acts 7:34-35).
F. Satan (II Timothy 4:17).

Along with these testimonies are numerous references to those who were delivered or saved from demon possession, sickness, diseases, armies of the enemy, dangerous situations, even from death itself. God's ability and power to deliver knows no bounds. Although the focus of this lesson has to do with the salvation of man's soul, God's delivering power is not limited to salvation from sin only.

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Included in the word *salvation* are various scriptural doctrines and concepts. All of these point to the effective work of salvation from sin in the life of the believer. Salvation includes, but is not limited to, the biblical doctrines of:

1. **Regeneration**—spiritual rebirth, being renewed, reformed, conversion, or spiritual renovation (Titus 3:3-6).

2. **Reconciliation**—restoration to divine favor, a change from enmity to friendship, to settle a quarrel, or bring into harmony (II Corinthians 5:17-20; Romans 5:10-11).

3. **Redemption**—to buy back, set free, rescue, or ransom (I Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:13-14).

4. **Adoption**—to place as a son, to take into one's family and treat as one's own child (Romans 8:14-23; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:3-7).

5. **Ransomed**—to loosen with a redemptive price (Matthew 20:28; I Timothy 2:6).

Salvation includes so many beautiful analogies and truths where salvation from sin is

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involved. Consider that due to sin we had to be remade, or born again as Jesus taught (John 3:1-8); the Bible calls this regeneration. Sin had separated us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), but Christ brought us near by His blood (Ephesians 2:13); this is reconciliation. We had sold ourselves for nothing (Isaiah 52:3) and were sold under sin (Romans 7:14), but Christ bought us back by His blood (I Peter 1:18-19); this is redemption. Our spiritual condition categorized us as children of the wicked one (John 8:39-44; I John 3:8-10), but Christ made us His children (I John 3:1-3); this is adoption. Once we were taken captive by Satan and held against our will (Hebrews 2:14-15; II Timothy 2:26), but Jesus Christ came and paid every demand so that our souls could be set free (I Timothy 2:6); this is a ransom.

What a song the saved have to sing, what a testimony to give! Call it redemption, reconciliation, or any other biblical term—it all spells salvation from sin.

FACTS ABOUT SALVATION

God's Word from Genesis to Revelation is filled with facts regarding this powerful subject. Consider these seven (God's number of completion) New Testament facts relative to salvation.

1. Salvation is in none other than Jesus Christ. Only through His name can we be saved (Acts 2:38; 4:12).

2. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Gospel preaching and obedience to it produce salvation from sin (Romans 1:16; I Corinthians 15:1-4).

3. A part of the armor of God is the helmet of salvation (Ephesians 6:17; I Thessalonians 5:8).

4. God's Word, the Scripture, makes us wise unto salvation (II Timothy 3:15).

5. It is the grace of God that brings salvation (Titus 2:11). We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8).

6. This salvation is so great and spectacular that even the Old Testament prophets inquired and searched diligently concerning it; even angels desire to look into it (I Peter 1:10-12).

7. While this salvation is called great (the Greek says vast and mighty), it is also called the common (meaning shared by all or several). Compare Hebrews 2:3 and Jude 3.

NOTES:

Other facts about God's salvation should be studied and added in the note section of this manual. Add Old Testament facts and references to those found in the New Testament. Scores of related incidents can be found there.

THREE STAGES OF SALVATION

Paul, in II Corinthians 1:9-10, referred to God as delivering him from what appears to have been a brush with death. He used all three tenses, past, present, and future, to describe how God saved him from death.

Our confrontation is not with physical death but rather spiritual death. Paul declared how we were dead in trespasses and sin, but God quickened us or made us alive (Ephesians 2:1-6). In Paul's personal deliverance from death we find a beautiful analogy of the three stages of salvation. All three tenses used in his description are applicable to our salvation from sin.

I. INITIAL SALVATION

Initial salvation refers to the experience of the new birth, which Jesus taught as an essential experience if we are to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:1-8). We come to God as sinners under the sentence of spiritual death without hope and without God (Ephesians 2:5, 12).

For us to obtain salvation or deliverance from such a hopeless state, God's Word outlines in simple understandable terms what we must do.

A. Faith is a prerequisite in coming to God (Hebrews 11:6). Believing that God is and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him is essential. Believing His Word, the Bible, and having a willingness and readiness to obey it is also necessary.

   Doubt creates confusion of mind and heart, diminishes our ability to receive help, and hinders our obtaining salvation. Believing the things described in the Scripture and obeying them is the only means of being saved. Our traditions, desires, past experiences, etc., have to be buried under our new-found faith in God and His Word.

   Following God's plan of salvation as outlined in the Scripture is imperative. Faith produces in us the desire and determination to go on to the following:

B. Repentance is an act, following faith, in which we seek God's forgiveness for our past and present sins. True repentance produces a godly sorrow that creates in us a change of mind and direction (II Corinthians 7:9-11). Such regret for

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our sins will so overcome us that, with God's help and power, we will forsake our sins and pursue a life of righteousness. Study Luke 13:3; II Peter 3:9; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38.

C. Baptism, by immersion in water, is an essential step for anyone desiring salvation from sin. New Testament converts have a scriptural command to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Luke 24:47; Acts 8:12-16; Romans 6:3-4; Acts 10:44-48; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Acts 19:1-7).

   Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of Matthew 28:19. Notice the command there is to baptize in the "name" of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. None of these are names, only titles, modes, or manifestations of the one true God. Jesus is the name of God; it is the name to be called over us in baptism.

D. Receiving the Holy Ghost, evidenced by speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, is not only a promise to us—it is essential. Jesus taught that we must be born again of water and Spirit (John 3:1-8); the Holy Ghost is the birth of the Spirit.

   God's Spirit, called the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, can dwell within us just as Jesus promised when He was on earth (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13). He compares the Spirit to rivers of living water (John 7:37-39), or living water (John 4:10-14). Jesus also promised His followers that He would send His Spirit (the Comforter, or Holy Ghost) upon them after His ascension (Acts 1:5).

   On the Day of Pentecost Jesus fulfilled that promise to His obedient disciples (Acts 2:1-4). Since then multitudes have received God's Spirit into their lives. God has not changed; He is still replicating the identical experience of the Day of Pentecost in the lives of millions. Join the throng of Bible believers and be filled with the Spirit. Study Acts 8:1-25; Isaiah 28:9-12; Acts 10:44-48; I Corinthians 14:18; Acts 19:1-6.

Upon completing these steps we are delivered from the fetters of sin; we are truly saved. Faith caused us to repent, repentance broke the power of sin, baptism in Jesus' name washed away our sins, and now the Holy Ghost empowers us to be a victorious Christian.

Paul declared at this juncture that we are (1) washed, (2) sanctified, and (3) justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (I Corinthians 6:11). Presently we are God's children, prepared for the Rapture or death, a babe in Christ, and a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). We have experienced all the things outlined under the topic "Doctrine of Salvation."

I now challenge you to concentrate on the second stage of salvation if you are to enjoy the third or final stage.

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II. CONTINUAL SALVATION

Since preservation constitutes a part of the definition of salvation, obtaining salvation is only a first step; maintaining our experience becomes a daily challenge. Satan would like to separate us from the love of Christ, causing us to turn again to the beggarly elements we were delivered from (Galatians 4:3, 9). Believers do not have unconditional eternal security in Christ! (See lesson 8 in Volume I of the *Christian Development Course*). It is possible to fall from grace and return to a spiritual state far worse than we were in when we came to God (Luke 11:26; II Peter 2:20-22).

After we are born again it is important that we establish some basic scriptural disciplines in our lives, including:

A. Praying each day (Matthew 6:5-13; I Thessalonians 5:17).
B. Reading the Bible (Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 2:15).
C. Fasting (Matthew 9:14-17; 17:14-21).
D. Being faithful to all church services (Hebrews 10:23-29; Acts 2:41-47).
E. Witnessing to others (Acts 1:8; 2:32).
F. Supporting our church with tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23).
G. Dressing as a Christian.
H. Shunning evil places and activities.
I. Laying aside unclean habits such as smoking, drinking, cursing, lying, etc., (I Timothy 2:8-15; Hebrews 12:1).

A list could be compiled of things we should or should not do as Christians; however, following these basic concepts along with the instruction of our pastor will set us on a course toward spiritual growth. From now until our lives are finished, we must fight against satanic influences in order to remain saved. We constantly need His deliverance just as we needed it when we were initially saved (II Corinthians 1:10; II Peter 2:9; I Corinthians 10:13). Staying in a saved state is a constant challenge and requirement for those who have been born again. While many trials will be encountered, God's rewards will far outweigh them all. God's people should be happy in their daily service to Him.

III. ETERNAL SALVATION

Being saved initially and walking with God on a daily basis, will ultimately bring us to the position of being eternally saved, meaning that we are delivered from all satanic and worldly influences for eternity. While it is now possible for us to fall into a state of being lost, in eternity this will be impossible. Those who have kept the faith and have fallen

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asleep in Christ are assured of this position. Those who are alive and go in the catching away, or Rapture of the church, will also enjoy the bliss of eternal salvation.

Each age from Adam until eternity begins will have those who found God and kept His Word. They will stand before Him in a state of preparedness and inherit eternal life, or eternal salvation.

Now we can rejoice in and declare, "I'm saved." However, until we finish our course we must retain this spiritual status in order to receive eternal salvation.

Once we are with Christ we will forever be delivered from the possibility of failure, power of sickness, death, evils of this world, and Satan. Then we can forever shout with the voice of triumph, "I'm saved!"

Scriptural references indicating this future stage of salvation before us are as follows: Romans 13:11; Matthew 10:22; Hebrews 1:14; 5:9; 9:28; I Peter 1:3-9; Romans 6:22; I Thessalonians 5:8-9.

REFLECTIONS

Presently the church is in the cleansing process, which is being accomplished by the Word (Ephesians 5:26). Soon Christ will present this purified church to Himself (Ephesians 5:27). Until then, may we endeavor to reach every lost soul we can with this message of salvation. We must teach every new convert the principles of the doctrine of Christ until they are strong stable teachers of the Word themselves (Hebrews 5:12-14). And we should admonish each person to heed the advice of the apostle James:

> "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh"
>
> (James 5:7-8).

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 1

SO GREAT SALVATION

1. What does the word *great* mean in this lesson? _____
2. Anyone preaching another gospel will be_____
   Scripture reference: _____
3. Define the word *salvation*. _____
4. The doctrine of salvation involves what five things? (A) _____
   (B) _____ (C)_____
   (D) _____ (E)_____
5. Define ransom. _____
6. Define reconciliation. _____
7. What is the meaning of regeneration?_____
8. Give the definition of adoption. _____
9. Define redemption. _____
10. List five facts about salvation. (A) _____
    (B) _____ (C)_____
    (D)_____ (E)_____
11. What are the three stages of salvation? (A) _____
    (B) _____(C) _____
12. List the four essentials of initial salvation. (A)_____
    (B) _____(C) _____
    (D) _____
13. Memorize Acts 2:38 verbatim. Did you do this? _____
14. Define repentance._____
15. List the three things Paul stated will happen to us in I Corinthians 6:11. (A) _____
    _____ (B)_____
    (C) _____
16. List seven important things for Christians to do. (A) _____
    (B) _____(C) _____(D)_____
    (E) _____(F) _____(G)_____
17. Do believers have unconditional eternal security in Christ?_____

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18. Unconditional eternal security for believers today is not taught in the Bible. Write a brief explanation of why this is true and give scriptural references. _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

19. When will believers be eternally secure? _____
20. What is the present state of the church? _____

LESSON 2

NOTES:

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

HEBREWS 6:1-10

Salvation is, or should be, the primary quest of every individual. Jesus taught us to make seeking the kingdom of God priority number one (Matthew 6:33). No greater position or status in life can be achieved than being saved from the bondage of sin.

Jesus Christ was manifest in the flesh for the express purpose of seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). Today the church, which is His body, has as its mission the saving of lost humanity. Heaven's best has been and is now being given for those who need salvation.

How to be saved is outlined clearly in the Scripture, is easily understood, and is available to all. Seeking and finding salvation for our souls must be our all-consuming desire. When we find it, we should cherish and guard it above all other possessions in life.

When we obtain salvation, by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:5, 8-9), we have received what Paul called "this treasure in earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7). When we receive salvation, several things accompany the experience of the new birth (John 3: l-8).

Hebrews uses an illustration of God blessing the earth with rain to produce vegetation. Not only were good things produced but thorns and briers were also produced. God pronounced a curse upon those thorns and briers; not only were they nonproductive, they were a detriment to fruit-bearing plants (Hebrews 6:7-9). Time and life will produce people who will fall into one of these two categories. However, the writer was persuaded that the Hebrew Christians would produce fruit rather than thorns and briers. Things that accompany salvation, when allowed to control our lives, will by all means produce qualities and character pleasing to God.

DEFINITION

Lesson 1 defined the doctrine of salvation, while this lesson reveals what accompanies salvation. Therefore, it is important that we understand the meaning of each term used here.

- **Accompany—**comes from the Greek word *echo* (ekh'-o) which is rendered as "nigh." Other translations render the word *accompany* as "go with," "have to do with," and "near to."[1] A. T. Robertson translated this phrase as "things holding on to salvation."[2] Henry Alford translated *accompany* as "akin to."[3]

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W. R. Nicoll defined the word as "associated with."[4] Webster gives the following definitions: "1. to go with or attend. 2. to be with, as connected; to attend."[5]

In view of these definitions, it is easy to conclude that when we are saved there are some powerful addendums accompanying salvation. The accompanying elements or components will enable us to bring forth fruit rather than bear thorns and briers, which would result in our being lost.

Salvation and the things accompanying salvation are two distinct concepts, but they are inseparable in that the elements accompanying salvation can only be secured when we receive salvation, not before. These things are a feature of, and an integral part of salvation itself. None can be received apart from the new birth experience; they accompany it.

SALVATION AND WORKS

Two contrasting teachings surround this topic; both are extremes and unbiblical. Some teach that a profession of faith alone is necessary for salvation with no obedience, effort, change of lifestyle, or guidelines for the believer. Others place their emphasis upon works, believing that works can save a person. Both of these concepts contradict biblical truths and confuse the listener.

A profession of faith alone or works alone are insufficient. We must find the true biblical perspective if we want to please God. Keeping Scripture in context while viewing the entire subject of salvation is important. Please consider the following:

1. Salvation comes by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:5, 8; Titus 2:11).

2. Salvation cannot be obtained by works apart from faith (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 11:6).

3. Good morals, self-discipline, and even righteous acts do not produce salvation (Acts 10:1-48; John 3:1-8; Acts 8:27-40).

4. Those receiving salvation in the New Testament engaged in repentance, baptism, praying, etc. (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4; 38, 41-47; 10:1-48; 19:1-6; 22:16).

5. Abraham's faith as shown by works brought him justification (Romans 4:1-21; James 2:21-24).

6. Faith coupled with obedience (repentance, baptism, praying, etc.) brings sal-

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vation (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4, 38, 41-47). These are not self-righteous acts of human effort; they are acts of obedience to God's Word. Human effort apart from obedience to the Bible will never save us; however, obedient faith on our part, as taught in the Scripture, will bring God to us in salvation.

7. A profession of faith alone cannot save a person (James 2:14, 17-18; 1:22). Works cannot save a man. We must have an obedient faith, the kind of faith that produces fruit, in order to be saved. (Study Romans 4:1-21; James 2:14-26.)

Social deeds, humanitarian effort, and good works will not save. Acts of obedience (that some call works), when the expression of faith, will bring God's saving grace and power to us.

Salvation from sin will produce a new creature in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17)—one who walks in newness of life and obedience to God's Word. Righteous acts, change of character, and holy living will manifest themselves in the lives of those who are saved.

When we live a holy and godly life in accordance with the Scripture, we must never allow anyone to intimidate us with the erroneous idea that we are trying to be saved by works. Our righteous acts are products of salvation. They did not produce our salvation—salvation produced them. Obedience to the Scripture and vain human effort, or self-righteousness, are poles apart.

Unchanged, compromising, so-called Christians are a hindrance to God's kingdom. Jesus said it best: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

Within this frame of reference many things accompany salvation, such as, but not limited to the following: A. When we are born again, the power of the Spirit will produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). B. We are now in a position to be used with the gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:1-11). C. Salvation brings sanctification, justification, and cleansing to us (I Corinthians 6:11). D. Power is given to us through the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Numerous benefits are afforded New Testament believers when they are born again. Although the things mentioned here are only a few of God's benefits, others abound in the Word of God. Add them to this study as you discover them.

NOTES:

In conjunction with other spiritual assets and resources, three outstanding things accompany salvation. Our challenge is to appropriate these things in our lives as Christians. They are as follows:

I. TRANSFORMATION

When we experience salvation as taught in the Scripture, an immediate transformation accompanies the experience. God's indwelling Spirit automatically creates a transformation, or transfiguration when one is born again.

Sinners do not evolve into Christians; they are transformed into Christians. An immediate, supernaturally wrought change transpires when Christ comes into our lives. How could we expect less when the Scripture says we have "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27)?

- **Transformation**—comes from the Greek word *metamorphoo* (met - a - mor - fo' - o), meaning to transform, change, or transfigure.

  Note: *Transfigured* comes from this same word. Jesus was transfigured before His disciples (Matthew 17:1-9), or as Luke states, "the fashion of his countenance was altered" (Luke 9:29). Jesus, being God manifest in the flesh, at this point allowed His indwelling power and glory to be revealed. So it is in our lives: Christ in us radiates forth until our very countenance is altered. Why and how? Because we have experienced salvation; Christ now dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3:17).

- **Transformation—**in the English language means: 1. the act or operation of changing the form or external appearance; the state of being transformed; a change in form, appearance, nature, disposition, condition, character, etc. 2. in biology, a change of form in insects; metamorphosis.

  Note: Although metamorphosis is a biological term, it aptly describes the transformation process. A tadpole changing to a frog, or a cocoon to a butterfly is metamorphosis or transformation.

New Testament saints are taught in the Bible not to be conformed (fashioned, configured, not adopt the customs of, imitate the way of or live in accordance with), to this world (the times, this age, or period). We are commanded to be transformed (transfig-

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ured, change the form or outward appearance, personality, character, and nature) (Romans 12:1-2).

Time will be needed for the unlearned or untaught in the Scripture to learn and comply. However, the erroneous concept of saints evolving (see definition) is destructive to babes in Christ. Growth and maturity occur in time, while transformation accompanies salvation. Teachable spirits, obedient attitudes, and a willingness to learn and accept Bible truths and ordinances are attributes of transformation.

Transformation calls for a change in dress, lifestyle, evil habits, speech, moral conduct, character, appearance, attitude, spirit, etc. Restitutions in matters of theft, dishonesty, improper behavior, etc., will occur when we are transformed. Saved people simply do not go on living, acting, dressing, talking, going to places they once went, cheating, etc., as before. God's grace, which brings salvation, teaches us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). God also gave us the ministry to guide us and teach us how to live in accordance with God's Word (Ephesians 4:11-14).

We cannot question our salvation and its accompanying transformation when the Bible expressly teaches us the following:

- We have passed from death to life (I John 3:14; John 5:24).
- We were once in darkness but are now in light (Ephesians 5:8; I Peter 2:9).
- We are no longer servants but are now sons (I John 3:1-3; Galatians 4:7).
- We were servants of sin but are now servants of righteousness (Romans 6:16-22).
- We have put off the old man and put on the new man (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:23-24).
- We are new creatures in Christ; old things have passed away and all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).
- We have been born again of water and Spirit (John 3:1-8; I Peter 1:23).
- We are translated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13).
- We are no longer what we once were (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

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- We are changed (transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Corinthians 3:18).

Salvation has the miraculous accompaniment of transformation for everyone who receives it!

II. REVELATION

Salvation not only brings with it transformation but is also accompanied by revelation, i.e., the illumination of divine truth. When we receive Christ into our lives through the Holy Ghost, He brings life and that "life is light" (I John 1:5). Following Christ gives us "the light of life" (John 8:12). "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130). In view of this, it is absolutely inconceivable that a new-born saint is devoid of revelation. God's Spirit and Word illuminate our heart, soul, and mind to God Himself as well as to His Word, the Bible.

We procure knowledge and understanding through study and experience. Revelation, brought by salvation, opens our mind and spirit to clearly see and understand the things we study for ourselves and are taught by the ministry. Consider this:

- **Revelation**—comes from the Greek word *apokalupto* (a - pok - a - loop' - to) meaning to take off the cover, disclose, reveal. *Apokalupsis* (a - pok - a' - loop - sis) is an extension of *apokalupto* meaning disclosure, appearing, coming, lighten, manifestation, be revealed.

W. E. Vine says that revelation is "the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul."[6]

Webster gives this definition: "1. a revealing, or disclosing. 2. in Christian theology, (a) God's disclosure or manifestation to his creatures of himself and his will; (b) an instance of this; (c) what is so disclosed or manifested; (d) something, as the Bible, containing such disclosure or manifestation."[7]

Jesus Christ, upon entering our lives through the Holy Spirit, allows us to see things, heretofore, undisclosed to us. In our lost condition we were in a state of darkness, unable to see or understand the wonders of God. Now, through revelation, the veil has been taken off; God's Word has a new meaning to us. Consider what God's Word teaches us regarding our former state versus our present position as believers:

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A. **BEFORE SALVATION**

1. The God of this world had blinded our mind (II Corinthians 4:4).

2. Our understanding was darkened; our hearts were blinded (Ephesians 4:18).

3. We were in darkness (Ephesians 5:8; I Peter 2:9).

B. **AFTER SALVATION**

1. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost: (1) Guides us into all truth (John 16:13). (2) Teaches us (John 14:26). (3) Testifies of Jesus (John 15:26). (4) Glorifies Jesus (John 16:14). (5) Calls God's Word to our remembrance (John 14:26).

2. We have the spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17).

3. God reveals things to us by His Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9-16).

4. The eyes of our understanding are enlightened (Ephesians 1:18-19).

5. Christ's deity was given to Peter by revelation (Matthew 16:16-17).

6. God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face on Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6-7).

Study, being teachable, and having an obedient spirit to God's Word, are essential supplements to revelation. Revelation, in this context, does not mean that God shows us everything, exempting us from study, prayer, and basic Christian practices. Rather, God's Word is now made plain, acceptable, and applicable to us because we have its author, the Holy Ghost, in our heart (II Peter 1:21; I John 2:27).

III. SEPARATION

Professing Christians who undergo no change in lifestyle, conduct, or spirit have done great harm to the cause of Christ. Damaging the kingdom of God even more extensively are those who once walked in holiness and separation but have now turned again to the beggarly elements of the world (Galatians 4:9; Colossians 2:8). Those entangled again

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in the sins and pollution of the world are worse off than they were before they ever found God; it would have been better for them to have never known the way of truth (II Peter 2:20-22).

Salvation is always accompanied by separation. Separation comes through two avenues: (1) we separate ourselves from the world and our former lifestyle and associates, (2) our former associates and the world separate us from them because we no longer fit—we are born again (Luke 6:22).

Spirit-filled people are pilgrims and strangers in this world. Our citizenship is in heaven. Sin, worldliness, and Satan become our enemies; therefore, we distance ourselves from the elements that would entangle us again in a yoke of bondage.

Simultaneously and synonymously God's Word and the Holy Ghost teach us to separate ourselves from our former mode of living. Study Ephesians 2:1-22 very closely in relation to this statement.

If we were lost and hell-bound because of our lifestyle and conduct, does not logic dictate that we separate ourselves from such? Absolutely! Moreover, God's Word explicitly commands us to separate from our former lifestyles of sinfulness and the world.

- **Separate**—comes from the Greek word *aphorizo* (af - or - id' - zo) meaning to set off by boundary, limit, exclude, appoint, sever.

Paul used this word in an emphatic manner (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

1. Believers are not to be *unequally yoked* with unbelievers.
2. Righteousness and unrighteousness have no *fellowship*.
3. Light and darkness have no *communion*.
4. Christ and Belial have no *concord*.
5. Believers and infidels have no *part* together.
6. God's temple (our body) and idols have no *agreement*.

Note: Look up the definitions (remember the context) of the words in italics.

II Corinthians 7:1 requires us to cleanse ourselves from (1) all filthiness of the flesh and (2) all filthiness of the spirit. Internal and external holiness are in view here. Christ within produces holiness without.

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- **The Logic of Separation**

Think about the reasonableness of separation from a scriptural and logical perspective.

1. Associates influence us. All our friends and family members may not be saved; therefore, we must restrict our fellowship with those who would influence us to do wrong.

2. Environment influences us. We must shun worldly entertainment and replace our former haunts with wholesome activities.

3. Reading influences us. Purveyors of filth through printed matter run rampant under the guise of freedom of speech. Read God's Word and other worthwhile reading materials that are carefully selected.

4. What we see influences us. God gives us victory over what is beyond our control in public What we watch willfully is another matter. Television and non-Christian video films are a detriment to Christians and should not be a part of our lives.

5. What we think about influences us. Satan has access to our minds, but he does not have power to control them. We must call down imaginations and thoughts, cleanse our minds daily, and constantly guard our minds against evil thinking.

6. What we hear influences us. Again, what we are subject to in public God will give us victory over. What we willfully receive through the sense of hearing affects our spirituality. Much of the music of our day is pornography set to music. Other forms of music incite lust, sex, violence, drugs, etc. Such things are to be shunned by godly Christians.

Upon receiving Christ into our lives we should study what the Bible teaches concerning separation in relation to our outward appearance. God's Word teaches us that women should not cut their hair and that men should keep theirs cut. We are not to dress immodestly or wear costly apparel. What we see, hear, think, read, where we go, and with whom we associate are to be altered in the Christians life (I Corinthians 11:1-16; I Timothy 2:8-15; Deuteronomy 22:5; I Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:11-12; I Timothy 4:12-16). Contrary to the thinking of some, separation is a Bible doctrine, not Pharisaism, legalism, or asceticism.

Your pastor will be a key person in your life to guide and instruct you in the ways of godly living. Mature saints should set a good example before new converts as to how to

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live. Be pliable, teachable, and receptive to the instruction given you and the examples set before you. Remember, Bible salvation is always accompanied by separation.

REFLECTIONS

Glorious things are brought to us through salvation. We have examined only a few of them here; however, they are vital and essential to our welfare and God's kingdom. Having salvation without its accompanying blessings and responsibilities is utterly impossible. Accepting Christ has always had its repercussions in every generation; nevertheless, its glory far outweighs its demands.

Having Christ in you is life's greatest asset. Living with Him in eternity will be the reward of living for Him on earth.

ENDNOTES

[1]Curtis Vaughan, *Twenty-Six Translations of the Bible* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publisher, 1985) 3:1058.

[2]Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, l932) 5:376.

[3]Henry Alford, *Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Guardian Press, l976) 4:117.

[4]W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974) 4:300.

[5]Noah Webster, *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (New York; Dorset and Baber, l983), 293.

[6]W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Renell Company, 1966), 3:293.

[7]Webster, 12.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 2

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

1. Define the word *accompany*. _____
2. Can salvation be obtained by works?_____Scripture: _____
3. On a separate sheet of paper, explain what kind of faith is necessary to receive salvation.
4. Define transformation. _____
5. What does the word *evolution* mean? _____
6. Define metamorphosis. _____
7. Define transfiguration. _____
8. What does the word *conform* mean?_____
9. Give three Bible illustrations from the lesson of what we once were versus what we are now. (A)_____(B) _____(C) _____. Support each answer with a verse of Scripture.
10. Define revelation. _____
11. Before salvation we were: (A) _____Scripture: _____
    (B) _____Scripture: _____
    (C) _____Scripture: _____
12. After salvation we have: (A)_____Scripture: _____
    (B) _____Scripture: _____
    (C) _____Scripture: _____
13. Define separation. _____
14. Separation comes through two avenues; what are they? (A) _____
    (B) _____
15. List the six things in II Corinthians 6:14-7:1.
    (A) _____
    (B) _____
    (C) _____
    (D) _____
    (E) _____
    (F) _____

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16. Name six things that influence us. (A) _____(B) _____
    (C) _____(D) _____(E) _____(F)_____
17. Briefly define the dangers of television and video films (use a separate sheet of paper).
18. How is music affecting our society and church? _____
19. List four things (of your own) that we would count as off-limits for Christians.
    (A) _____(B) _____(C)_____(D) _____
20. Name some areas in which we should alter our lifestyle in order to be a Christian example to others.

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LESSON 3

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WHY SICKNESS COMES AND HOW TO BE HEALED

MATTHEW 8:16-17; JAMES 5:13-18

Before the fall of Adam and Eve it appears that they were immune to, or not susceptible to, sickness or disease. After their fall humans lost their immunity to sickness and disease. Since that time human suffering has known no limits.

Man's original sin has become the root of all sickness, yet other factors are involved. God's Word opens up to us many avenues of insight into this age-old problem that will be with us until we have a body fashioned like His glorious body (Philippians 3:21).

Because of our desire to live as long as possible while enjoying optimum health, billions of dollars are spent on this effort. Our society is so caught up in the dream of life and health that men and women spend an entire lifetime on this dream. As well as this may be, we are still confronted with hopeless, incurable diseases on every side.

Jesus Christ is a healer! Without question we know He has and can heal all manner of sickness and disease. Yet the fact remains that many are not healed; human suffering goes on, and eventually we all die. God has the power to remove all sickness and eliminate death: why then does He allow people, and especially His children, to suffer?

Every question cannot be answered, but hopefully this study will bring clarity to some. While searching for answers regarding sickness or healing, let us not forget that our main objective is to be saved. Salvation is not predicated upon, neither does it always bring, a strong, healthy body.

We must consider contextual clarity and balance relative to physical healing. Some take the miracles of the Bible, especially the Gospels, and build their hope and ministry on only the part that brings physical well-being. While this is important, these truths and miracles are designed to bring people to salvation from sin. We will be judged in the end, not by how well or strong we were, or whether we were healed or not, but by how we lived our lives.

WHY SICKNESS COMES

Man's original sin produced our present environment in which sickness, disease, and death hold sway. However, there are some specific causes of sickness, disease, and

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infirmity that we need to consider. Every type or kind of sickness cannot be explained as to why it comes or whether we will be healed or not. Those given are general points of reference from the Scripture to enable us to understand better some root causes.

If you are in the throes of some tragic physical malady, perhaps you can find help and direction from this lesson; and when healing comes, give God the glory. If healing does not come, never doubt Him or His ability to heal; learn to trust Him and lean upon Him in spite of pain and suffering. Above all, be sure your soul is right with God. That position assures you of a new body free from sickness and death.

Consider these causes of sickness and how to be healed.

I. TO TEST OUR FAITH AND LOYALTY TO GOD

Job serves as an example of what can happen in the life of a person living for God. (Study chapters 1-2 of Job.) God held Job up to Satan as one who feared Him. As a final result of Satan's accusations, God removed the hedge from around Job and allowed Satan to take his possessions and finally his health.

Some calculate that Job had to endure this terrible tragedy and malady for a year or longer. Eventually the trial came to a close, Satan was shown Job's dedication, and Job was healed.

Trials come in many forms and these trials can come through the avenue of sickness. If your sickness is a trial such as Job's, healing will come at the end of the trial. Our task is to be faithful during such times and not charge God foolishly (Job 1:22; 2:10).

II. BECAUSE OF SIN AND DISOBEDIENCE

Man's original sin caused all of us to be subject to sickness. On the other hand, our individual sin and disobedience can subject us to a personal encounter with sickness, disease, and even death.

A. **MIRIAM**—was smitten with leprosy because of her conduct (Numbers 12: 1-16).

B. **ISRAELITES**—were bitten of serpents because of their wrongdoing (Numbers 21:4-9).

C. **CORINTHIANS**—many were weak and sickly because of their wrongful handling of the communion service (I Corinthians 11:26-34).

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People in our world, especially those who do not know God, suffer untold personal suffering because of their individual sin and rebellion. Consider the results of drinking, smoking, immorality (disease of AIDS), etc.

If the sickness of believers is due to personal sin and disobedience, the route to healing is repentance and restoration. God is trying to awake these individuals, get them to turn from sin, and save them from the second death.

III. TO KEEP US HUMBLE

Although it may sound cruel, this may be the only way to keep pride from destroying us. Some people's attention cannot be arrested outside of physical pain and suffering. Far better is it for God to use physical suffering to keep us humble than for us to be lost.

A. **DAVID**—His testimony was, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psalm 119:67; see Psalm 118:18).

B. **PAUL**—Was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from being exalted (II Corinthians 12:7-10). What this was, we are not sure, but he referred to it as an infirmity (Galatians 4:13-15). Infirmity comes from a Greek word often translated as sickness, along with other meanings.

   Study I Timothy 5:23; Luke 13:11-16; Matthew 8:16-17; Luke 5:15 in relation to infirmity.

   Job gives tremendous insight on this topic; however, we will need to analyze it carefully to understand what Job said (Job 33:16-30).

If infirmity comes to keep you humble, you may never be healed or delivered from it. Nevertheless, God's grace is sufficient to keep you and help you bear it. Personal reflection and discernment are needful at this juncture. Paul realized the basis of his infirmity and accepted God's grace to sustain him.

IV. TO REVEAL THE POWER AND GLORY OF GOD

No one wants to get sick, but before the glory and power of God can be manifest in healing someone must be sick. Could it be that we encounter sickness and disease in order for God to receive glory by healing us? Apparently so, according to the following references:

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A. **MAN BORN BLIND—**Jesus made it clear that this man's blindness was no't a result of his or his parent's sin. Rather it happened so that the works of God could be made manifest (John 9:3).

B. **LAZARUS**—Apparently Lazarus's sickness and even death happened to bring glory to God and manifest His resurrecting power (John 11:1-4; see John 2:11).

Whenever we are healed of sickness and disease, God deserves all the glory. We must recognize God as our healer, not the minister or the ones who pray for us.

V. BECAUSE OF DEMON POSSESSION AND SIN

Note that *only* the unsaved are referred to in this topic. God's people, even the weakest saint, is *not* demon possessed. Sinners and backsliders can be demon possessed but not saints of God! "Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4). If you are a child of God, stop listening to the devil or someone who tells you that you are demon possessed.

Note also that saints or sinners (who are not demon possessed) can and often have some of the same problems discussed here. Demon possession must be discerned, not decided by physical handicaps!

Old age, birth defects, accidents, and other things can create or cause physical handicaps and impairment. Common sense, good judgment, and fairness must accompany our encounters with physical problems, along with compassion, love, and prayer for the afflicted.

Each example given here is a direct result of personal sin and demon possession; in context, each person involved was in such state before coming to Christ.

A. **BOY WHO WAS A LUNATIC**—Matthew 17:14-21; 4:24.

B. **MAN WHO WAS DUMB—**Matthew 9:32-35.

C. **BOY WHO WAS DEAF AND DUMB—**Mark 9:14-29. (Same boy as in Matthew 17, yet notice that a deaf and dumb spirit possessed him).

D. **MAN BLIND AND DEAF—**Matthew 12:22.

E. **DEMONIAC OF GADARA—**Mark 5:1-19. (This man was so possessed of demons until he was mentally deranged.)

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F. **GIRL VEXED OF THE DEVIL**—Matthew 15:21-31.

G. **MAN WITH INFIRMITY**—John 5:1-14. (When Jesus healed this man He told him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" [John 5:14]. A powerful principle is presented here: sin apparently caused his problem, and it would be worse if he quit following Christ and returned to sin).

Upon encountering any person with one or all of these problems, we should be cautious in pronouncing its cause as demon possession. If physical problems are a direct result of demon possession, when the demons are cast out then healing and restoration will occur. In each instance where Jesus cast out demons causing physical problems, the people were healed.

If physical impairment in a sinner's body is not a result of demon possession, the person may be born again of the water and Spirit and still be physically impaired. Remember, the essential thing is to be born again and live in accordance to God's Word. All who do so will go to heaven whether they are sick or well while on earth.

VI. BECAUSE OF THE AGING PROCESS

Due to our limited life span, having bodies designed to deteriorate, we encounter sickness and disease. Elderly people with health problems should not be condemned because of their weak and sick bodies, nor be made to feel that they have lost their faith or favor with God.

A. Study Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 for an analogy of what happens in old age. If you are not old yet, observation will indicate that these things happen exactly as described.

B. Paul taught us that the outward man perishes (II Corinthians 4:16), and this earthly tabernacle will be dissolved (II Corinthians 5:1-9). The dissolving of our bodily tabernacle involves sickness and disease to accomplish it.

C. Asa was stricken with a disease in his feet when he was old (I Kings 15:23).

One visit to aged parents, friends, or a nursing home, will drive home this point. Ministers and saints alike are not immune to the aging process. Neither is their illness an indication that God has forsaken them or that they have lost faith for healing.

Yes, God heals elderly people, but they are still old. Healing is not a fountain of youth—it is relative to our age. Sickness comes through many avenues, and the aging process is one of them.

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Note: Along with the six things already mentioned in determining the cause of sickness, we should also consider childhood illnesses such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, etc. Some people have seasonal afflictions such as sinus, flu, asthma, etc. Others are involved in accidents creating paralysis, mental derangement, blindness, etc. Birth defects can cause serious physical problems.

Whatever the cause (how can we even identify them all?), God is able to deliver and heal any type, form, or kind of sickness or disease.

OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING SICKNESS AND HEALING

We should consider several facts and scriptural concepts before we become rash or charge God foolishly in our desire for victory and healing.

God healed me personally of an incurable disease when I received the Holy Ghost some thirty-five years ago, and I have been healed many times since. I am an advocate of healing and miracles; nevertheless, we must consider all things in the context of God's Word. Add your observations to these as you study.

1. Because a person is healed does not mean he is saved. Sinners can be healed and continue in their sinful ways. Remember: God honors faith for healing on anyone's part.

   Salvation and deliverance from sin does not guarantee physical healing and health. Many people come to God with a disease or sickness, are born again, and then have the sickness until they die (John 5:2-14; Matthew 9:1-8; Acts 28:8-9).

2. Saints have a promise in James 5:14 that when they call for the elders and are anointed with oil and *if* they have sinned, then they are forgiven when healing comes. This verse of Scripture does not mean that a saint's sickness is caused from sin, nor does it mean that when someone is sick that he has sinned. Please notice the *if* in context.

3. Signs, wonders, and miracles wrought under a person's ministry do not indicate that they have the truth or will be saved because of their great works (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; Matthew 7:21-23).

   Truth and preaching the gospel take precedence over manifested signs and

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tokens of God's power. Never be swept away by signs unless they are accompanied by the truth of the new birth and holiness.

4. Healing is a result of faith in God on our part, the part of those praying for us, or both coupled together. Methods of praying for the sick may vary but should be biblical. Several different methods were employed in the Scripture, namely:

   A. Jesus touched some (Mark 1:41; 8:22).
   B. Jesus took some by the hand (Mark 1:31; Luke 14:4).
   C. Jesus laid his hands on some (Mark 8:25; Luke 4:40; 13:13).
   D. Jesus used spit on some (Mark 7:33; 8:23).
   E. Some touched Jesus (Mark 3:10, 5:28; 6:56; Luke 6:19).
   F. The shadow of the apostle Peter enabled some to be healed (Acts 5: 14-16).
   G. Handkerchiefs and aprons were brought from Paul (Acts 19:11-12).
   H. Disciples and elders (of today) anoint with oil (Mark 6:13; James 5:14).
   I. Believers (saints or ministers) can lay hands on the sick (Mark 16:18).

      Note: Only the elders of the church should anoint with oil. Laymen should only lay hands (without anointing with oil) upon the sick and they shall recover.

   God instructs us in the New Testament to anoint with oil or simply lay hands on the sick. Other methods may be used as the Spirit directs, but these directives in God's Word should be used.

5. Healing is not in opposition to, or in competition with, the medical profession. Medical experts have helped many (and I have no condemnation for doctors); however, they are not an extension of Christ's healing ministry. Two different things are present here: (1) medical science and (2) God's healing power. They are distinct entities; therefore, we should not confuse them.

   When going into any medical facility to pray for someone, always show the medical profession due courtesy and consideration. Good manners, spiritual decorum, and being neatly dressed are important.

   You do not have to belittle the medical profession for God to heal someone. Give them credit and honor for what they do, but give God the glory as the healer.

6. Healing is a promise and privilege provided God's people; however, we should not demand that God heal us simply because we are saved. Survey the cause

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(as presented in the first part of our study), make a spiritual self-examination, ask God to heal you as you obey James 5:14. When God heals, give Him glory. When He does not heal, trust Him and serve Him anyway.

7. Healing is not a substitute for our disregard of physical, mental, and emotional health. Proper rest and diet are important; healing will not override foolishness and abuse of our bodies. We must learn our limitations (ruling out laziness) and order our schedule accordingly (Exodus 18:18; Mark 6:30-32).

8. Healing is not a plan of God to escape the results of the aging process, and neither is it designed to circumvent death. All the people Jesus healed are now dead. Even being raised from the dead does not circumvent dying again unless we are caught up in the resurrection.

9. Healing is a result of obedience to God's Word (James 5:14), along with exercising faith in God. Doubt and unbelief can stop the healing power of God (Mark 6:5-6; Matthew 17:14-21). Fasting coupled with prayer is often needed in order for us or those we are praying for to be healed.

10. Some experience healing, while others are not healed or perhaps are partially healed. With all that God's Word shows us, we still see through a glass darkly (I Corinthians 13:12). Both sick and well, rich and poor, victims and victors will exist in the world together. If you are a victim of your faith or a victor because of it—rejoice, both will be saved (Hebrews 11:32-40). Paul saw many healed yet left Trophimus sick (II Timothy 4:20). James was beheaded while Peter was delivered (Acts 12:1-19). Elisha performed many miracles yet died because of sickness (II Kings 13:14).

    My admonition to you, especially if you are sick, is be encouraged, God loves you. If He heals you, praise Him; if He doesn't, serve and trust Him—someday He will give you a new body. Until then, keep your faith strong in God.

11. There is no such thing as "divine health," i.e. a doctrine that says (1) if you live right you will never be sick; (2) all sickness is a result of individual sin; (3) when you come to die, you will never be sick but will just fall asleep in Jesus.

    God can keep us from sickness and harm; He can and will heal us. Yet God does not heal everyone, even among the saints. All sickness is *not* a result of personal sin, and we can be sick and suffer before we die even though we are saved. (Remember Elisha, II Kings 13:14.)

12. Trusting God for healing while rejecting medical assistance is not essential to salvation. Some teach that if a saint goes to any kind of a doctor he will be lost

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on that basis alone. Some who so teach wear glasses, visit chiropractors, or involve themselves in all types of vitamin therapy or like concepts. Often these types of people find their way to the doctors when sickness comes hard upon them. Trusting God is easy when you are well; it is also easy to impose on others.

Let us be fair to the Scripture and our fellow man regarding trust in God for healing. A person must be born again of water and Spirit and then live a holy and godly life if he is to be saved. No passage of Scripture teaches, neither does the spirit of the Word imply, that a person will be lost for going to a doctor.

However, due to financial affluence and health insurance, we sometimes go to the medical profession too quickly. We should go to God first in prayer and obey James 5:14. Remember, Asa was condemned for seeking the physician rather than God (II Chronicles 16:12). Oh, what God could do for us if we would only ask Him and trust Him!

GOD'S PROMISE REGARDING HEALING

God's Word emphatically promises and exemplifies healing of the human body. Although the death of Jesus Christ was necessary to completely effect our healing; it is a fact that by His stripes we are healed (I Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5). Christ's suffering and beating in Pilate's judgement hall was the event that assured healing for our bodies; for this we should be grateful.

Humans need physical, spiritual, and emotional healing in their lives. Jesus Christ has provided all of these and promises them to us in His Word.

There is a constant abiding promise of healing: (1) when we lay hands on the sick in Jesus' name (Mark 16:18); (2) when we call for the elders of the church and they anoint us with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:14). Healing has been provided by Christ's stripes and is contingent upon our faith and obedience to these two practices. In addition to this there are "gifts of healing" and the "working of miracles" that can bring healing and deliverance when one or both of these spiritual gifts is in operation (I Corinthians 12:1-11). There are miracles that do not involve the healing of a body. There are physical healings that are also called miracles (Acts 4:16, 22). Healing can come through the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, or it can come through the abiding promise of God's Word.

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When healing does not come, consider the causes of sickness. Then examine your confidence level, because doubt can stop the healing power of God (Mark 6:5-6; Matthew 17:14-21). Not asking or asking amiss (James 4:2-3) can hinder our healing. After a thorough, scriptural checkup of all elements involved, we will either obtain healing or sustaining grace when we are not healed.

Again when healing comes, glorify God; when it does not, trust Him and remain true to Jesus Christ. Remember, God bears witness with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost *according to His own will* (Hebrews 2:4). God's will should be paramount in our lives; what He wills let us willingly and joyfully accept.

REFLECTIONS

God is a healer. We owe Him praise for whatever measure of health we enjoy. He is deserving of our confidence and faith, not only to heal us but to do what is best and right, although it may involve physical suffering.

I challenge you by this lesson to: (1) have greater faith in God in order that you may see more healings; (2) adhere strictly to your responsibility of obeying James 5:14; (3) be used of God as a lay member when you practice Mark 16:18; (4) never to lose your scriptural balance—always keep salvation and healing in perspective; (5) keep the faith in spite of what may happen to your physical body.

Much remains to be said on the subject; therefore, I appeal to you to build upon this study until you know the Healer of all diseases as you can and should know Him.

NOTES:

WORKSHEET
LESSON 3

WHY SICKNESS COMES AND HOW TO BE HEALED

1. Was Adam and Eve subject to sickness and death before the fall? _____
2. What caused the human race to become subject to sickness and death? _____
3. Can our faith and loyalty to God be tested through sickness or disease? _____
   Give an example: _____
4. Personal sin and disobedience can bring physical suffering. Give two examples of this: (A) _____(B)_____
5. Paul was given a _____a_____of Satan to _____ him lest he be _____above measure.
6. The man in John 9 was born blind for what reason? _____
7. Are saints ever demon possessed? _____Why?_____
   Scripture reference: _____
8. Is everyone who is blind, deaf, dumb, etc. demon possessed? _____
   Support your answer._____
9. Can demon possession cause physical malady and impairment? _____
   Scripture reference. _____
10. Are older people who are sick weak in faith? _____
    Support your answer._____
11. Name some other causes of sickness other than the six outlined. (A) _____
    (B) _____(C)_____
12. When people are born again are they always healed? _____
13. What are God's promises to saints in James 5:14? (A) _____
    (B) _____
14. Do persons performing miracles always have the truth? _____
    Support with Scripture. _____
15. What are New Testament elders to do when they pray for the sick? _____
    Scripture: _____ Those who are not elders are to _____
    _____. Scripture: _____
16. Are doctors and medical science an extension of Christ's healing ministry? _____
    Why? _____

NOTES:

17. Healing always comes for the sick. T _____F_____; Is a substitute for physically abusing your body. T _____F_____; Makes us young and keeps us from dying. T_____F_____.
18. _____can hinder us from being healed.
19. Does the Bible teach "divine health"? _____Support your answer. _____
20. Is trusting God for our healing while rejecting medical assistance essential in order to go to heaven?_____ Support your answer._____

NOTES

LESSON 4

NOTES:

PRIESTHOODS OF THE BIBLE

I PETER 2:1-10

Beginning in Genesis and continuing through Revelation the reader discovers several priestly orders. Both the Old and New Testament present priesthoods of tremendous importance to each era. To ignore the full biblical perspective of these priesthoods is to miss one of the outstanding doctrines of the Scripture. Focusing on one priestly order while neglecting the others would be an injustice.

Defining each biblical priesthood, its span of existence, and its function is important. When we do so, marvelous truths of types with their respective antitypes open to us.

We should study the priest as to his right and authority to serve as priest and the sacrifice as to its purity and acceptability to God. New Testament Christians must possess this biblical perspective if they are to please God.

Many religions have an established priestly order to serve in their particular rituals. Most of these are quite complicated regarding qualifications, restrictions, and roles of service. Most have an ascending order or a hierarchy of graded ranks. In the Roman Catholic Church this hierarchy extends to its highest prelate, the pope. Many secret societies have an ascending grade and rank of officers even to the extent of a sacerdotal order. Rituals are often performed with connotations and mixtures of heathen customs. Upon studying such priestly orders it will quickly be discovered that they are without scriptural foundation. Most evolved into their present state by combining heathen custom, religious rites, and political power.

Intrusion into a priestly order outside biblical guidelines always brought God's curse upon the intruder. Substituting manmade rituals or heathen custom for God's planned order always brings His judgment. From the first sacrificial offering brought to God by Cain and Abel, some people have tried to substitute God's order of sacrifice with their own. Regardless of how religion or society has tried to pollute or corrupt the office and role of the priest, God has had and still has a true priesthood.

Exposing corrupt and unbiblical sacerdotal orders would be time consuming and thwart our purpose. By exalting true biblical priesthoods we automatically expose the false and establish the true.

Each of the four priesthoods in the Bible provides within itself enough material for a book; therefore, these notes will be in concentrated form regarding each priesthood.

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Hopefully these will serve as a springboard and motivational tool eliciting more study relative to each of them.

I. PRIESTHOOD OF MELCHIZEDEK

Melchizedek comes to us as a powerful priest in the economy of God in both the Old and New Testaments. Though he was a real figure in time and history, prophecy (Psalm 110:4) and mystery surround this priest of God. The Scripture gives us enough information concerning Melchizedek (Melchisedec is the Greek spelling of this Hebrew word) for us to understand his priestly work and order.

While it is not essential to salvation to know or understand who Melchizedek was, it is essential that we know the One whose priesthood was established upon the order of Melchizedek's priesthood—Jesus Christ.

A. FACTS RELATIVE TO MELCHIZEDEK

Numerous scriptural facts enable us to understand who Melchizedek was. References are found in Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:1-28.

1. Melchizedek was the king of Salem. Salem is Jebus or Jerusalem (Psalm 76:2; Judges 19:10; I Chronicles 11:4).

2. His name is interpreted King of Righteousness and King of Salem, which is King of Peace.

3. He met Abraham when he returned from the slaughter of the kings and pronounced a blessing upon him. The less is blessed of the better (Hebrews 7:7).

4. He brought forth bread and wine to Abraham. This serves as the first type of the New Testament communion service.

5. He was a priest of the most high God.

6. David mentioned him in Psalms, prophetically linking his priestly order with Christ's. Hebrews 5:5-6 refers to this prophecy, along with another

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Messianic prophecy in the Psalms.

7. Abraham gave him tithes of all. Tithing originates here not under Mosaic law as some say.

8. He was without father, mother, descent, beginning of days, or end of life. This statement means that there is no recorded genealogical record of any family members of Melchizedek.

9. He was made *like* the Son of God. He was not the Son of God, only like him.

10. He was a man. Apparently Melchizedek was a Canaanite with a revelation of who God was and who filled the priestly role of offering sacrifices to God. He could not have been a Jew since Abraham was the father of the Jews.

11. His descent was not from the tribe of Levi (Hebrew 7:6), for Levi came from Abraham. However, Melchizedek received tithes from the man (Abraham), whose descendants (Levites) would receive tithes from Israel. The Levites received tithes but paid tithes in Abraham long before their priestly order was established.

12. Another priest, Jesus Christ, was after the order of Melchizedek rather than after the order of Aaron or the Levitical priesthood (Hebrews 7:11-15).

We will uncover other pertinent facts as we research this first recorded biblical priesthood. Always stay with truths relative to Melchizedek that are consistent and harmonious with the entirety of the Bible.

B. FALSE CONCEPTS RELATIVE TO MELCHIZEDEK

Several concepts, and roles have been attached to Melchizedek that are not contextually consistent with the whole of Scripture. Among these teachings and ideas are:

1. Melchizedek was a theophany (manifestation of God). While God did manifest Himself in several roles, not once was one of them called by a proper name. Melchizedek is a proper name; therefore, it would be wrong to call him a theophany of God.

2. Melchizedek was an angel. Although angels have appeared in the form of

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a man, they are never referred to as kings or priests, nor do they receive tithes. Angels are messengers or ministering spirits of God; therefore, Melchizedek was not an angel.

3. Melchizedek was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ did not exist as a man before Bethlehem. If Melchizedek was Jesus Christ, then Christ's true and proper name would have been "Melchizedek Jesus Christ." This idea is totally inconsistent with Scripture.

4. Melchizedek was God and not a man. Such an idea is in direct conflict with God's Word. Melchizedek was a man; he was not God, a theophany of God, or Christ preexistent. Christ did preexist Abraham as God, but not in the person of Melchizedek (John 8:56-58).

5. Melchizedek is an eternal being. Some interpret Hebrews 7:3 to mean that Melchizedek is an eternal being. This statement referred solely to the genealogical record of Melchizedek. If Melchizedek is in fact an eternal being and still living, then we have at present two priesthoods—that of Christ and that of Melchizedek. Such teaching would be inconsistent with God's Word.

Some have espoused ideas and teachings relative to Melchizedek that are inconsistent with Scripture and do harm to his identity and work. Let us simply accept the facts relative to this divinely appointed and sanctioned priesthood that establishes an order upon which Christ's priesthood rests. Doing so will bring honor to Christ without doing harm to God's Word.

Since Christ's priesthood is established after the order of Melchizedek, this connection will provide an inexhaustible source of study for the serious student of the Word.

II. PRIESTHOOD OF LEVI

God chose the tribe of Levi from among the other tribes of Israel to serve as priests under the Old Testament law. Levi, the son of Jacob, had long been dead when God chose his descendants to fill a special place under the law. Due to a specific order from God, the Levites were to serve as priests, offering animal sacrifices and carrying out priestly duties under the old covenant.

Moses was a descendant of Levi and was chosen of God to be the leader of Israel, while

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Aaron his older brother was to serve as the high priest of Israel. Other descendants of Levi were to serve in priestly functions, but only a direct descendant of Aaron could serve as a high priest.

The Levitical priesthood was in effect from the days of Moses until the days of Christ. (Those who rejected Christ as the Messiah continued with animal sacrifices under the Levitical priesthood even after the time of Christ.) Due to the length and scope of the Levitical priesthood, we will not delve into every aspect of it; rather, I will give references for you to study as far as your individual interest may carry you. Numerous typical truths will unfold as you study their garments, physical requirements, arrangements around the tabernacle, sacrifices they offered, and their consecration.

Contrasting the Levitical priesthood with that of Christ's is an extremely enjoyable study. Comparing the high priest's position, as well as that of other priests, to Christ's work as our high priest is interesting. Some areas of study are as follows:

A. The high priest's garments and what they typify (Exodus 28:1-43; 39:1-31; Leviticus 8:1-13). Research the arrangement, placement, what and how each was made, and what each typified.

    1. Coat
    2. Breeches
    3. Girdle
    4. Bonnet
    5. Robe of the ephod
        a. Pomegranets on the robe
        b. Bells on the robe
    6. Ephod
        a. Onyx stones that held ephod at the shoulders
        b. Names and their arrangement on the two stones
    7. Breastplate
        a. How it was attached to the priest's garments
        b. The stones and whose name was on each
    8. Urim and Thummim
    9. Girdle of the ephod
    10. Mitre

B. The consecration of the priests (Exodus 29:1-37; Leviticus 8:1-36).

C. The physical requirements along with other restrictions applicable to the priesthood (Leviticus 21:1-24). Note these restrictions and their spiritual application.

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1. Could not defile themselves with a dead person
2. Marital restrictions
3. Physical perfection demanded they not have the following flaws or blemishes.

   a. Blindness
   b. Lameness
   c. Deformed nose
   d. Anything superfluous
   e. Broken foot
   f. Crooked back
   g. Broken hand
   h. Dwarf
   i. Eye blemish
   j. Stones broken
   k. Scurvy or scabs

D. The requirements placed upon the sacrifices they were to offer to God for the people (Leviticus 22:17-25; Malachi 1:7-8, 12-14). No sacrifice could have the following defects; determine what each of these problems are and what each typifies.

   1. Blind
   2. Broken
   3. Maimed
   4. Wen
   5. Scurvy
   6. Scabbed
   7. Anything superfluous
   8. Lacking in parts
   9. Bruised
   10. Crushed
   11. Broken
   12. Cut

Numerous other restrictions applied to sacrifices; they, too, are interesting to study.

God chose the Levites to serve in the priesthood in lieu of the firstborn (Numbers 3:5-13). God had slain the firstborn of Egypt, and all the firstborn in Israel were to be His.

This priesthood served as a type and shadow of heavenly things. The Tabernacle they served in also served as a figure of the true tabernacle, which God pitched and not man (Hebrews 5:1-4; 8:1-5). Hebrews presents beautiful truths relative to the Levitical priesthood as contrasted with Christ's priesthood.

Studying, remembering, and understanding the Levitical priesthood with all its offerings, washings, sacrifices, etc., is a vast field of study. Bible scholars need to have a thorough understanding of the Tabernacle, priesthood, and offerings as established under the law. This brief exposition is designed to motivate you to fulfill this challenge.

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III. PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

Christ's priesthood, while established after the order of Melchizedek, and contrasted with the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood, transcends both orders. Peter described our rejoicing in Christ as being with "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8). How much more is the priesthood of Christ beyond description with human words. In contrast to all other priesthoods, it ascends to such heights until we are awed by its works.

To define and describe this monumental priesthood would require volumes to be written; nevertheless, these few paragraphs should arouse a desire to know more about this "great high priest" (Hebrews 4:14). His person, sacrifice, office, and offering are important; therefore, they should be studied and understood.

Due to the inexhaustible material involving types and antitypes pertinent to Christ's priesthood, only a few facts and contrasts will be presented. Hopefully you will build upon these facts until the goal of this study is achieved.

A. Christ is our merciful and faithful high priest (Hebrews 2:17).

B. Christ is the apostle and high priest of our profession (Hebrews 3:1).

C. Christ is a great high priest (Hebrews 4:14).

D. Christ is passed into the heavens and has sat down, denoting His finished work of offering His sacrifice (the sacrifice of Himself) (Hebrews 4:14; 9:24; 10:11-14).

E. Christ is touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15).

F. Christ is a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6; 7:17).

G. Christ changed the Levitical priesthood and the law due to its imperfection (Hebrews 7:11-12).

H. Christ is of the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi. He is a priest by oath, not tribal lineage (Hebrews 7:13-21).

I. Christ has an unchanging priesthood; He lives eternally (Hebrews 7:16, 23-25).

J. Christ in His priesthood is (1) holy, (2) harmless, (3) undefiled, (4) separate from sinners, (5) made higher than the heavens, (6) free from the offering of daily sacrifices, (7) consecrated forevermore (Hebrews 7:26-28).

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K. Christ sacrificed Himself, shed His own blood, and entered into the true tabernacle not made with hands. (Study carefully Hebrews 9:1-10:39.)

L. Christ died outside the gate of Jerusalem just as the sin offering was burned outside the Tabernacle. We are to go there, bearing His reproach (Hebrews 13:10-13).

Everything past, present, and future hinges upon the priesthood of Christ. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). His blood brings remission of sins, and there is no need for, nor will there ever be, another offering for sin (Hebrews 10:18, 26). Once and for all He shed His blood for our sins, rent the veil of the Temple, and opened the way into the holiest of all for each of us. You and I can approach the throne of God for ourselves, He is the only mediator between God and man, and His blood gives us right and access into His presence. What privileges we enjoy! Our high priest is our advocate, intercessor, propitiation, and mediator—all in the person of Jesus Christ.

IV. PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

Each of the three priesthoods we have studied are essential predecessors to the priesthood of believers. Of course, without the priesthood of Christ this priesthood wouldn't exist at all. Its work, position, and authority rest solely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, our great high priest.

Introducing this final New Testament priesthood of believers, the apostle Peter used two terms to describe it (I Peter 2:1-10).

- **Holy Priesthood**
  Peter used the word *holy* here to designate that New Testament believers are saved, pure, blameless, and consecrated. As such they have a right to offer up scripturally designated sacrifices to Christ since they are His sons (I Peter 2:5).

- **Royal Priesthood**
  Peter's use of the word *royal* denotes that we are under the patronage of the king; we belong to the sovereign; we are the king's noblemen or priests (I Peter 2:9). God desired Israel to be a kingdom of priests, but due to national failure He ascribed that honor and duty to the tribe of Levi (Exodus 19:6). However, the New Testament church has achieved this lofty status with Him as a royal priesthood.

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God's Word is not telling us there are two separate and distinct priesthoods of believers; Peter described one priesthood as both holy and royal. There is only one priesthood of believers, which these terms simply define.

Our role and position as priests unto God is of divine origin. It is meeting a present need and has future implications and eternal consequences (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Our study will center around the present-day work of this royal priesthood.

We will examine two important facets of our position in Christ as priests in order to achieve balance and keep us in harmony with the Scripture.

A. **ROLES OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS**

Scripture gives us specific guidelines relative to our role as priests unto God. To go beyond or fall short of these instructions would render us displeasing to God. Since we are designated as priests, due to our being the children of God, we of necessity must follow the instruction of our great high priest, Jesus Christ.

Collectively the church is a priesthood, while individually we are priests. Therefore we have a solemn individual responsibility to offer up to God the sacrifices He has commanded. Another person cannot perform our tasks and duties. We alone are responsible for rendering to God what belongs to Him. How and what we are to offer God is clearly defined in His Word.

1. We Are to Present Our Bodies (Romans 12:1-2).

Note that Paul specifically said "a living sacrifice," meaning that daily we are to live our lives in sacrificial service to the One who died for us. Presenting our body as holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service, involves many facets. Keep in mind these facts:

a. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:16-20).

b. God demands physical and moral purity (I Corinthians 6:13-20; Matthew 5:28; Romans 1:21-28; I Thessalonians 4:1-5).

c. We are to glorify God in our body and spirit (I Corinthians 6:20; I Peter 2:12).

d. God requires separation for His priests in the way they dress, their

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hair, where they go, how they talk, what they watch, what they listen to, etc. (I Corinthians 11:1-16; Deuteronomy 22:5; I Timothy 2:8-15; I Peter 3:1-7; Matthew 6:22; Psalm 101:3, I John 3:15-17; Acts 19:19; Mark 4:24).

Each priesthood we have studied was distinctive in every fashion. Can this New Testament priesthood of believers be any less?

God's demands of us are reasonable in every respect. Paul warned us against entering into areas of physical abuse or ridiculous action or conduct in order to feel more holy or close to God (Colossians 2:18-23). Living a life of holiness consistent with the Scripture is not in view in this warning. God expects every generation to live holy before others if they are to be a part of this priesthood.

2. We Are to Offer Spiritual Sacrifices (I Peter 2:5).

Note here how the apostle designated us as living stones being built up into a spiritual house. Study the following seven spiritual things noted in the Bible:

a. Spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
b. Spiritual meat, drink, and rock (I Corinthians 10:1-4).
c. Spiritual house (I Peter 2:5).
d. Spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1-11).
e. Spiritual mind and understanding (Colossians 1:9; Romans 8:6).
f. Spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16-17).
g. Spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:35,44-49; II Corinthians 5:1-8).

God does not want us to be ignorant concerning spiritual things, especially since we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices; therefore, He has enlightened us through His Word (I Corinthians 12:1; 9:11; Romans 15:25-27).

3. We Are to Offer the Sacrifice of Praise (Hebrews 13:15).

Constantly praising and worshiping God should be part of any believer's sacrifices to God. We should praise, pray, sing, worship, give, etc., by commitment rather than by inspiration. The writer of Hebrews described this as the fruit of our lips; Hosea called it rendering the calves of our lips (Hosea 14:2).

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Praise is an inexhaustible study from both an Old and New Testament perspective, I encourage you to pursue such study.

4. We Are to Offer the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving (Psalm 116:17).

   One of the crowning sins of the end-time generation is a spirit of unthankfulness (II Timothy 3:1-5). God's priesthood should constantly offer up sacrifices of thanksgiving just as they did in the Old Testament (Leviticus 7:11-15; 22:29; II Chronicles 29:30-31; Jonah 2:9).

   Why would thanksgiving be considered a sacrifice? Because we are prone to become ungrateful, we can feel self-sufficient as though we needed no one else, and we tend to forget who gave us the blessings we enjoy.

   We are to enter God's courts with thanksgiving (Psalm 100:4), we are to make our requests with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6), and we are to continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2). Let us make thanksgiving a part of our daily sacrifice to God.

5. We Are to Offer God a Broken Spirit (Psalm 51:15-19)**.**

   Our human spirit can become so obstinate and hard until we become rebellious and self-willed. God wants a sacrifice emanating from not only without but from within; a broken and contrite spirit fulfills God's desire. God desires truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6) and pronounces a blessing upon the poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3; Isaiah 66:2).

6. We Are to Sacrifice a Freewill Offering from Our Mouth (Psalm 119:108).

   David no doubt offered many freewill offerings (those not expected or required) from the flock; here he asked God to accept such an offering from his lips. He requested of God that the words of his mouth and meditation of his heart be acceptable to Him (Psalm 19:14).

   How much more should we who have been saved and are priests unto the Lord offer voluntary, unexpected, unelicited, and unrequested praise and thanksgiving unto our God!

   Israel brought many freewill offerings and sacrifices to God under the law (Leviticus 22:18-23; 23:38; II Chronicles 31:14).

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"Freewill" in each of these passages comes from the Hebrew root word *nadab* (naw-dab), meaning to volunteer (as a soldier), present spontaneously, offer freely, give liberally, an abundant gift, freely, plentiful, and willingly.

What an example to New Testament priests of the Lord when they question what they could and should give unto the Lord! A freewill offering from our mouths (or one from our pocketbooks) is always in order.

7. We Are to Sacrifice of Our Substance to God (Proverbs 3:9; Luke 8:3).

"Substance" in these verses comes from the Hebrew word *hown* (hone), meaning wealth or riches, and the Greek word *huparchonta* (hoop-ar'-khon-tah), meaning things existent or in hand, property, possessions, or goods.

Lesson 15 in Volume I of this series covers the entire spectrum of tithes and offerings as taught in the Scripture. Nevertheless, let me briefly point out the importance of giving a portion of our means to the work of God. We offer this as a part of the New Testament priesthood in sacrifice to God.

Paul lauded the Corinthians for first giving of themselves and then of their substance to God (II Corinthians 8:1-5). Any person who truly gives himself to God will automatically make a sacrifice of his substance.

During Old Testament times God required that both the gift and the giver be pure in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable (Hebrews 11:4). He condemned Israel for offering to Him sacrifices that were lame, crippled, and unacceptable (Malachi 1:7-14). How much more diligent should we be as priests in offering our sacrifices unto Jesus Christ!

The Scripture clearly defines our role, commission, and duties as priests of the Lord. Let us strive in every way to carry out our charge with precision and perfection before God.

B. REGULATIONS FOR THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

Defining our role as priest is important and essential; however, it is necessary for us to examine our regulations and limitations in order that God's kingdom retain its intended balance.

Some have adopted and embraced the concept that each New Testament

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Christian is free to set his own standards, write his own rules, and live by his own code since he is a priest to God. Some have extended this philosophy to the point that they feel they are over their immediate family, having a divine right to set rules and standards for them whether they harmonize with Scripture or not. Such thinking and teaching runs counter to God's Word and should never be adopted by true saints of God. While we do have individual and familial rights and responsibilities, these never supersede or contradict the teachings of the Scripture.

Our priesthood as a believer is without question subject to scriptural regulations, and as such, should be adhered to by each of us. God has a divine order for the church, home, and individual, and we should subscribe to this order without quibbling and questioning. Since so many areas are in view here, I will only present a few of the major ones for your consideration:

1. Subjection to the ministry and local church is a responsibility of each member of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-14; Matthew 18:15-20; Acts 15:1-35; 20:28; I Corinthians 11:1-16; 12:28-31). Rebellion against the ministry (the pastor) and the church's biblical teachings will render our individual priesthood useless and our sacrifices unacceptable. Recall Korah's fate (Numbers 16:1-40), Saul's intrusion into Samuel's place (I Samuel 13:5-14), Uzziah's intrusion into the priest's place (II Chronicles 26:1-23), and the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-17).

2. Faithfulness to the local church is a scriptural truth and principle as well as a logical one (Hebrews 10:25; I Corinthians 11:20). Drifting from church to church or holding a family service at your own will desecrates us and our efforts. We should establish ourselves and our families in a local church that upholds truth and holiness, and we should support it in every way. It is from this position and through this policy that we offer up acceptable sacrifices to God.

3. Rightfully and scripturally designating our tithes and offerings is essential to retaining our right to the priesthood. Using our tithes and offerings for personal use, sending them where we wish, sharing them with friends and family members is a violation to God's sacred trust in us. You and I well know that our tithes are for the support of the ministry, and our offerings are for the support of the church.

   After we have faithfully discharged our duties to our local assembly, any of our money that we want to share with others is acceptable and commendable. God will bless us for this extension of love and sacrifice; however, let us keep our finances in proper order and in the proper places.

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Study lesson 15 of Volume I of this series for details on this point.

4. Spiritual gifts, praying for the sick, and other scriptural acts and deeds are all governed by the Scripture and are under the control of God's Word and the ministry as outlined in Scripture (I Corinthians 12:1-14; Mark 16:17-18; James 5:13-20; I Peter 5:1-5; Hebrews 13:17).

5. Leadership roles assigned us as a minister or saint are always subject to the one who gives us the position. Submission and obedience to authority is a must if we are to retain our biblical position as a priest of God. Not one position that has ever been established or will be established gives the holder the right to rebellion, to sow discord, or to discredit that position on the basis of his priesthood.

By and large God's people, both minister and saints, respect God and His Word enough to submit to its order. May we never become heady or high-minded to the extent that we fail to submit to God's ordained plan for our lives.

While the priesthood of believers gives us certain and specific rights and obligations, it never removes us from the regulation and condition of service laid down in the Bible. Our role will never be diminished or destroyed so long as we follow God's prescribed order. Every restriction, if we deem it as such, is for our safety, protection, and preservation as a priest of God. Controls never render us ineffective; rather, they enhance our effectiveness when we subscribe to them.

REFLECTIONS

Sacrifices, along with the offering of sacrifices, hold prominence throughout the Bible. Viewing both gift and giver through the eyes of God gives tremendous insight into what He expects in both. Pleasing God as the giver and with the gift should be our highest desire. Doing so brings personal happiness, spiritual growth, and rewards both now and eternally. Ignoring God's divine order brings His curse, personal defeat, a loss of our position in the priesthood, and eternal destruction if not corrected.

With these thoughts in mind I implore you to search the Scripture, understand each biblical priesthood, find your place in God, and pursue it diligently. Be your best and offer your best, and God will give you His best.

NOTES:

WORKSHEET
LESSON 4

PRIESTHOODS OF THE BIBLE

1. List four facts about Melchizedek. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____,(D) _____.
2. List three false concepts about Melchizedek. (A),_____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____.
3. Who was the first high priest under the law? _____
4. What tribe was chosen to be priests? _____
5. Moses came from the tribe of _____
6. The Levitical priesthood extended from _____to_____.
7. Name five parts of the high priest's clothing. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____,
   (D)_____, (E) _____.
8. List five physical impairments a priest could not have. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____,
   (D)_____, (E) _____.
9. List six impairments a sacrifice could not have. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____,
   (D) _____, (E) _____, (F) _____.
10. Christ's priesthood is after the order of the_____priesthood.
11. List six facts about Christ as a high priest. (A) _____,
    (B)_____, (C) _____,
    (D) _____, (E) _____, (F)_____.
12. Name the seven things that Christ is, relative to His priesthood. (A) _____,
    (B)_____, (C) _____,
    (D)_____, (E) _____,
    (F) _____, (G)_____.
13. What are the four biblical priesthoods? (A)_____,
    (B) _____, (C)_____, (D) _____.
14. What two terms did Peter use to describe the priesthood of believers?
    (A)_____, (B) _____.

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15. Enumerate the seven things we are to offer to God. (A) _____,
    (B) _____, (C) _____, (D) _____,
    (E) _____, (F) _____, (G) _____.
16. Seven spiritual things are mentioned in the Scripture; what are they?
    (A) _____, (B) _____, (C)_____
    (D) _____, (E) _____, (F) _____,
    (G)_____.
17. David used the word *freewill*; what does it mean? _____
18. What does the word *substance* mean? _____
19. Being a priest of God relieves us of obligations and regulations. T _____ F_____
20. List four regulations for the priesthood of believers. (A) _____,
    (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____.

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LESSON 5

NOTES:

THE "IF" OF SIN

I JOHN 1:5-2:3

Other titles for this study could be "Conquering the Sin Problem," "Saints and the Sin Question," or "Knowing How to Deal with Sin." Since all our lives are touched by the sin problem, it is imperative that we know how to deal with it scripturally. John the apostle gave us a synopsis on how we should view and handle sin.

Being a universal problem, along with being a major Bible subject, sin needs to be analyzed by those who desire to be, or have been, set free from its control.

Since this study is confined to only a brief text on the subject, further study will be necessary when reading or teaching this lesson.

DEFINITIONS

Two words in our text need to be properly defined for a better understanding of our subject. Definitions of other words such as trespass, iniquity, unrighteousness, err, fault, etc., will shed additional light on this subject.

1. **If**—comes from the Greek word *ean* (eh-an'), meaning in case that, provided, though, when, or whenever.

   Webster defines it as "in case that, granting that, supposing that, or allowing that."

2. **Sin—**comes from the Greek word *hamartano* (ham-ar-tan'-o), meaning to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), to err, offend, trespass. Sin also comes from the Hebrew word *chata* (khaw-taw'), meaning to miss, to sin, an offence (sometimes habitual sinfulness), an offender, fault, a crime or its penalty, a criminal or one accounted guilty, an offense and the penalty or sacrifice for it.

   Scripture uses so many terms to identify and define sin that we cannot include all of them here, but you should add them to your notes as you study.

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FACTORS RELATIVE TO SIN

We should note several important facts in order to understand sin better as the Bible portrays it. By consulting a concordance, you will be able to find numerous other important facts that are not included here.

I. SIN DEFINED

Defining sin can be a simple yet complex matter since interrelated factors broaden the scope of sin. God's Word gives us both general and specific definitions of what sin is; however, we only include direct biblical statements here.

A. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23).

B. If we have respect to persons we commit sin (James 2:9).

C. When we know to do good and do it not, to us it is a sin (James 4:17).

D. Sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).
Law in the Scripture is (1) a decree, rule, or command, or (2) a principle. This passage refers to God's Word whether written or spoken, not just to the law of Moses. Adam transgressed God's law, which was God's spoken command to him. From Adam to Moses people sinned and died although there were no written commandments (Romans 5:12-14). Since Moses' day we have written instructions on how to live; violating them is sin and will result in God's punishment unless we repent.

E. All unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17).

To understand these specific statements properly, we must have a working knowledge of the entire Bible, and we must further define and broaden each point with the help of Scripture.

II. SIN DESCRIBED

We need a description of sin in order to handle the problems it presents. The following description should help you understand the unrelenting warfare going on within your life.

A. **SIN IS A PRINCIPLE**. When Paul spoke of the "law of sin" (Romans 7:23) "law" here means "principle." He informed us that within every person there

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is a principle of sin. He further described it as the body (or organized power acting through the members of the body, or organic instrument) of sin (Romans 6:6; 7:24; 8:10). Even the new birth does not deliver us from this principle, law, or body. We must reckon it dead, not yield our members to unrighteousness, and mortify the deeds of the body (Romans 8:10, 13; 6:6, 11-13).

We received this nature, or body from our father Adam. Here temptation originates as we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed. Uncontrolled lust produces sin and sin culminates in death (James 1:12-16). God's grace and the power of the Spirit are essential elements in ruling over this law of sin, or else it will rule over us.

B. **SIN IS AN ACT**. As an act, sin causes us to do one of the following two things, both of which are wrong in the sight of God. There are sins of:

1. Omission—Things we are taught to do and know to do but fail to carry them out because of weakness or rebellion (Matthew 23:23; James 4:17).

2. Commission—Things done in violation of God's Word whether willfully or ignorantly (James 1:15; 2:9; 5:15, 20; I John 5:16; Acts 7:60).

Both are condemned by the Scripture and are wrong for any person. By omitting righteous acts or committing sinful acts, we submit to the law, or principle of sin.

III. FACTS OF SIN

We cannot record every fact, result, and consequence of sin. Sin is cruel, and the results of sin are cold and hard. Thank God we have a Saviour who has broken the chains of sin so that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).

A. By one man sin entered into the world (Romans 5:12).

B. By law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20; 7:7).

C. Sin is not imputed where there is no law (Romans 5:13).

D. If we commit sin we are the servant of sin (John 8:34).

E. Only one sin is unpardonable (Matthew 12:31-32).

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Facts of this nature are important for us to know and understand as we face and overcome Satan, the one who sinned from the beginning (I John 3:8).

IV. DIVISIONS OF SIN

Categorizing sin as to its seriousness or consequences is not in view here; rather the interest is to show how God's Word divides human sins into two categories.

A. **SIN WITHOUT THE BODY**—Though committed with the actual members or in the heart and soul of our physical body, all sins except one are said to be committed outside the body (I Corinthians 6:18)

B. **SIN AGAINST OUR OWN BODY**—The sin of fornication (any sexually immoral act) is against our own body due to the involvement of the emotions, spirit, and physical body (I Corinthians 6:15-18). Study Proverbs 6:20-33 for an understanding of the seriousness of this sin.

Understanding these divisions of sin is essential to the purity and sanctity of the believer.

V. SIN CLASSIFIED

While all sin is damning, condemning, and unscriptural, it is important to understand the classification it falls under.

A. **SINS OF THE FLESH**—These sins are acts and deeds of the body that affect the person sinning, along with others. Such sins as murder, theft, drunkenness, revelling, witchcraft, etc. are in view here.

B. **SINS OF THE SPIRIT**—These sins affect our personal emotions, disposition, and attitude. Sins such as hate, jealousy, bitterness, lust, envy, etc., fall into this category.

As you think upon these classifications of sin, study II Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 5:17-26; Mark 7:20-23.

VI. SIN'S REMEDY

What a tragedy if we only knew the facts, divisions, classifications, descriptions, and definitions of sin but knew no remedy for such a terrible malady! Thanks be to God, He has provided a remedy for the sin problem by the incarnation of Himself in human flesh.

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Jesus Christ came with a solution and remedy for the sin problem. No longer do we have to be bound, knowing only the hopelessness of our dilemma. The Lamb of God has come to take away the sins of the world.

A. Christ came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15).

B. Christ, who knew no sin, became sin for us (II Corinthians 5:21).

C. Christ washed us from our sins in His own blood (Revelation 1:5).

D. Christ provides us grace that abounds over sin (Romans 5:20).

E. Christ was manifested to take away our sins (I John 3:5).

F. Christ died for our sins (I Corinthians 15:3).

Jesus Christ is our only remedy for the sin problem. We have no control over the power and influence of sin unless the power of Jesus Christ, or the Holy Ghost, abides in our life.

VII. SIN'S "IF"

The Bible commands believers not to sin (I John 3:1-10; Romans 6:1-2, 15; Titus 2:11-12; I John 2:1). However, applicable scriptural remedies exist for the saint of God if he sins. John introduced six "ifs" for us to consider relative to the problem of sin. Every believer should acquaint himself with these "ifs" in order to be the kind of Christian that God wants him to be, a triumphant overcomer.

A. **THE "IF" OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD**—Fellowship (communion, partnership) with God is predicated upon our walking in the light (I John 1:6). Walking in darkness while saying we have fellowship with God makes us a liar and violator of truth. Moreover, fellowship with God is predicated upon our fellowship with our brethren.

   Let us note the six principles that John established relative to Christian brotherhood:

   1. Walking in darkness, according to Scripture, is hating our brother (I John 2:9-11).

   2. Hating our brother makes us a murderer (I John 3:15).

   3. Hating our brother indicates that we do not love God (I John 4:20).

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4. We are not of God if we do not love our brother (I John 3:10).

5. We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren (I John 3:14).

6. He that hates his brother is in darkness (I John 2:9).

Loving our brother is an essential prerequisite to having fellowship with God.

B. **THE "IF" OF WALKING IN THE LIGHT**—God is light, His Word is a light, and His people are a light when we walk (the habitual course of life, outward and inward) in the light as He is in the light (I Timothy 6:14-16). Consider the two powerful events that occur when we walk in the light:

1. We have fellowship one with another.

2. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

Our walk, our fellowship, and our cleansing are interwoven factors. Undirected paths or broken fellowships stymie our cleansing from sin.

C. **THE "IF" OF ADMISSION**—At birth each of us became subject to the body of sin, or principle (law) of sin. In times of weakness or temptation we have omitted or committed things contrary to God's will. Denying this fact creates two problems:

1. Self-deception. We only deceive ourselves, perceiving ourselves as righteous by denying the problem of sin.

2. The truth is not in us. We categorically deny what the Scripture teaches by failing to admit to the sin problem.

D. **THE "IF" OF CONFESSION**—Confession to the extent of our sins is the appropriate measure to take. Sinning before God, man, or the church should elicit a confession of failure and a request for forgiveness from God and man.

Forsaking our sins after we confess them is a Bible requirement (Proverbs 28:13). Acknowledgement and admission, along with forsaking sin brings:

1. Forgiveness of our sins from a faithful and just God.

2. Cleansing from all unrighteousness. This comes through the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7).

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E. **THE "IF" OF HONESTY**—Denying acts of sin before and after conversion is defiant of God.

1. We make Him a liar. God's assessment of humanity is that all have sinned and come short of His glory (Romans 3:23).

2. His Word is not in us. God's engrafted Word saves our souls (James 1:21). If the seed of God (His Word—Luke 8:11) remains in us we cannot sin (I John 3:9), simply because the power of the Word overrides the power of sin. God's Word must abide in us in order for us to receive an answer to our prayers (John 15:7), for us to be cleansed (Ephesians 5:26), and for us to be true disciples (John 8:31).

F. **THE "IF" OF FAILURE**—God's Word is an instructor that tells us what sin is and that we should not commit sin. However, knowing the power of the flesh and the law of sin, God was aware that His children could and would fail; therefore, He provided a remedy for us. We do not have to sin, but "*if*" we sin we have an advocate (intercessor) with the Father. Our advocate is Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man (I Timothy 2:5).

Failure does not have to be permanent for the saint. Restoration to divine favor comes through obedience to the truths presented in this lesson. Confession, which includes repenting, forsaking the sin, walking in the light, loving the brotherhood, being honest, and having His Word in us brings renewal and restoration to God and man.

Believers can err (James 5:19-20); they can be overtaken in a fault (Galatians 6:1); they can sin (I John 2:1; 5:16-17); they can have something against other believers (Matthew 5:23-24); they can stumble, be offended, or be weak (Romans 14:1, 21); they can be sinned against and wounded (I Corinthians 8:12-13).

When any of these things occur, we must personally act upon God's Word by going to our advocate, Jesus Christ. Collectively and individually we as a church should help restore such a person to fellowship.

Brothers or sisters who have been offended are hard to be regained (Proverbs 18:19). Nevertheless, we can restore and win them through forbearance and forgiveness (Colossians 3:13; Mark 11:25-26; Luke 17:1-4).

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REFLECTIONS

This study has only touched the tip of the iceberg of sin. In nothing here do we intend to glamorize sin or set it on a pedestal. Rather the true intent is to do exactly what the law did for this formidable foe of God's people of all ages: "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13).

Sin's consequences are evident in every segment of society. Its end result is to carry people down to hell. Oh, what a Savior is Jesus Christ, coming to deliver us from its clutches through the new birth and to restore us to divine favor should we fail after we are saved!

Sin stains like scarlet and crimson; God washes its stain away to make us like wool and white as snow. "If any man sin, we have an advocate" (I John 2:1). Here is where sin meets defeat, and we become triumphant.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 5

THE "IF" OF SIN

1. Define the word *if*._____
2. What does the word *sin* mean in the Greek? _____Hebrew? _____
3. Give three scriptural definitions of what sin is (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
4. *Law* in Scripture means (A) _____, (B) _____.
5. Sin is a (A) _____, (B) _____.
6 Sin as an act consists of two things. What are they? (A)_____, (B)_____.
7. Sin entered into the world by or through how many persons? _____ Scripture: _____
8. How many sins are unpardonable? _____ Scripture: _____
9. What is the unpardonable sin? _____
10. Name the two divisions of sin. (A) _____, (B) _____.
11. According to Proverbs 6:20-33, a person who commits adultery receives what? _____
12. We are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the (A)_____, (B) _____
13. How are we cleansed from sin? _____
14. Why did Christ come into the world?_____
15. Give three scriptural principles relative to loving or hating our brother: (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
16. How do we know we have passed from death to life? _____
17. What two things occur when we walk in the light? (A) _____, (B) _____
18. If we confess our sin God does what? (A)_____, (B) _____
19. Can a failing Christian be restored? Write a short explanation at the end of this sheet on how one can be restored. Give Scripture to support your answer. _____
20. List the six "ifs" of sin. (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____, (D) _____, (E) _____, (F)_____.

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LESSON 6

NOTES:

KNOWING THE VOICE OF GOD

JOHN 10:1-16, 27

Each of us is in an ongoing learning process, constantly honing our abilities to define and classify the things of God. Therefore, it is imperative that we know God's voice. Although our learning process may never be fully complete, we can become skilled, whatever our developmental stage may be, in knowing God's voice.

Confusion abounds over whether certain things are of God or Satan. Sanctified common sense is always needed along with other positive directives in order to determine the things of God versus those of Satan. This lesson is designed to take away doubt, eliminate hurts, provide guidelines, and settle questions in your mind about the will of God.

New doctrines, satanic deception, and false teachers have appeared on the scene in every age. Nothing in my experience of over a quarter of a century of pastoring indicates that this will change. As long as the church is on earth, it will be targeted by Satan to deceive and destroy if possible. New and devious devices of satanic origin will always plague us. God has established some fundamental truths that are absolute and relevant to all generations lest they fall prey to Satan's deception.

One of life's most critical areas for both minister and saint is that of knowing the voice of God. I am convinced that God's people want to obey Him; the dilemma we face is knowing beyond any doubt whether God is speaking to us or not. The object of this study is to help both minister and saint to take the guesswork out of this vital matter.

Obviously, because of time and space we cannot cover each scriptural example or point here. However, these basic guidelines should stay the course for you. While I have included personal experience that I have gained through trial and error, God's Word remains the final authority on this subject.

DEFINITIONS

Discerning and recognizing God's voice in the midst of so many other voices is challenging to each of us. Therefore, it is essential to understand the terms of our text.

- **Know**—comes from the Greek word *ginosko* (ghin-oce'-ko), which means to perceive, be resolved, be sure, and understand. Webster defines the word as "1. To perceive with certainty, to understand clearly. 2. To be acquainted or

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familiar with. 3. To have clear and certain perception." John 7:17 says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

- **Voice**—is from the Greek word *phone* (fo-nay'), meaning a disclosure, a tone (articulate, bestial, artificial), saying, or language. One definition given by Webster that is applicable to the text is "1. Any sound regarded as like vocal utterance; as, the voice of the sea. 2. Anything regarded as like vocal utterance in communication to the mind; as, the voice of his conscience."

- Kenneth Taylor, in his Living Bible paraphrase, translated John 10:27 as, "My sheep know my voice. . . ," to "My sheep recognize my voice. . . ." This is helpful in view of our subject.

GOD'S SHEEP KNOW HIS VOICE

Many variables affect us relative to knowing God's voice. Through the maze of information and input from so many areas that are not of God, His voice can still be heard. Certainty and assurance are essential since they are our only means of withstanding Satan's onslaught. When we know we have heard from God, we can resist every force of hell that comes against us.

1. Being close to God is essential to hearing and knowing His voice. Lukewarmness, carnality, and worldliness develop a distance between us and God until we cannot hear Him when He speaks.

2. Since there is a human will and a divine will, conquering our will is a must before we can be submissive to God's will.

3. God need not speak to us directly concerning anything already written in His Word. Although His Spirit may remind, convict, or call us to obedience to the written Word (which is His voice), He is not obligated to speak to us audibly the things already contained in the Scriptures. Our responsibility is to study and obey God's Word, accepting everything written as His will and voice.

4. One-time calls can impact an individual for a lifetime! (Ministers and missionaries will relate to this statement.) We may receive confirmations, renewals, and encouragement to fulfill God's call, but just knowing He has spoken motivates us to carry out His command. Consider Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, the apostles, and Paul in this context.

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5. We are to try the spirits since a spirit of error and a spirit of truth exist simultaneously (I John 4:1-6). According to Paul there are many voices in this world (I Corinthians 14:10). Therefore, through trial and error, time and experience we will come to know His voice.

6. Our own mind generates voices, better known as self-talk. Satan, people, books, thoughts, pictures, etc., constantly bombard our minds with voices and impressions. Distinguishing God's voice in the midst of such din and confusion is a challenge.

7. God leaves many things to common sense, practicality, and nature to guide us. God does not have to speak to us concerning where to park or sit, whether we should walk on the sidewalk, etc. Minor decisions are left to our God-given, innate intelligence; we do not need God-given directives in insignificant decisions.

8. God will give us any instructions we need if they are not already available to us. He is our Shepherd, He speaks to His sheep, and His sheep know His voice.

METHODS THROUGH WHICH GOD SPEAKS

Several and varied methods exist as vehicles through which God may speak; let us examine the more basic ones.

1. **God's Word**—The Bible is the most reliable source we have to depend upon as being God's voice. Without error, contradiction, or fallibility, we can trust God's Word as the final authority on any and all matters.

   Every other method presented in this lesson must come back to the Word as the final reference point. Never believe or accept anything as being from God if it contradicts the Bible. Trusting others or yourself to be right is always a mistake; obey God's Word regardless of the cost. Remember the fate of Adam and Eve for disobeying God's Word.

2. **People of God**—Men and women of God whom you have confidence in can help you know God's voice, or God may speak directly to you through them. Pastors and other ministers are essential to our spiritual welfare and balance when it comes to knowing God's voice. Eli helped Samuel when he was confused over the voice of God (I Samuel 3:1-18).

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3. **God Speaks Directly to Us**—God uses this method to call people into His service and give specific directions and instructions to them in vital matters. God spoke to Abraham while he still lived in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:1-4). He spoke with Moses through the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-18). God talked to Balaam through a donkey (Numbers 22:22-35). God still speaks today through His Spirit, giving direction, leadership, and instruction to His people (Acts 8:26-29; 10:19; 13:1-2; 16:6).

   We should guard against haste and overzealousness when acting upon what we feel is a directive from God. Calls from God do not die, while excitement, fervor, and zeal have a way of cooling with time. New converts should become rooted and grounded in the truth before making important decisions based upon what they think is a direct order from God.

4. **Gifts of the Spirit**—Prophecy, as well as tongues accompanied by an interpretation, is God speaking to us. Both scriptural methods are to be judged by the listeners, which does not mean they should criticize or ignore what is said but rather judge its accuracy and adherence to Scripture (I Corinthians 12; 14).

5. **Dreams and Visions**—Both of these occur in the lives of most people without having any scriptural or spiritual meaning. When we rely on a dream or vision as a directive from God, we must be absolutely sure God is speaking. God spoke to many in His word through this method. Among them were:

   A. Solomon (I Kings 3:5-15).
   B. Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13, 19, 22-23).
   C. Pilate's wife (Matthew 27:19).
   D. Peter (Acts 10:9-18).
   E. Paul (Acts 18:9-10).

6. **Angels—**God has and can send an angel, one of His messengers, to us with a message. When we know it to be an angel of God (remember, the devil has angels), we should regard it as God speaking, should the angel speak to us in some manner. Both Old and New Testaments abound with experiences of angels visiting people. A few of the people to whom angels appeared are: (1) Hagar—Genesis 16:7-11; (2) Abraham—Genesis 22:11-19; (3) Zacharias—Luke 1:5-22; (4) Cornelius—Acts 10:1-8; (5) Philip—Acts 8:26-27.

7. **By Impression**—Although we could consider this as God speaking to us directly, I want to distinguish between the audible voice of God and an impression upon our mind by the Spirit. Each of us has inner voices or self-talk, along with other outside forces making impressions upon us. By no means are all of

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our impressions from God; therefore, we must become sensitive to the extent that we can determine what is from God versus what is from the world, the flesh, or the devil.

Trial and error come into play here. All make mistakes when acting on impressions alone, since impressions can originate from many sources. Reflect on past impressions. Let time and experience teach you until you do not act impulsively on every impression, but only those you know are from God.

God's Spirit guides, grace teaches, and God often speaks in a still, small voice. Consequently we must have an ear that can hear what the Spirit is saying to us. All this goes on within the heart and mind as an impression, a method used often and extensively by our Lord to speak to us.

In directing a service, making financial decisions, receiving a call to service, making minor or major decisions relating to life or church, etc.—in any or all of these God could speak to us by impressions. It is known as a still, small voice, one we have learned to detect by impression.

Remember, always authenticate the voice of God by using the Bible as a final reference point. Whether it be a minister, angel, spiritual gift, audible voice, dream, vision, or impression, we must verify and document it by the Word. Our generation needs to hear from God and then act upon and obey what He tells us to do.

THE VOICE OF STRANGERS

People who know God's voice will not follow a stranger, because his voice is different from the one they are accustomed to following (John 10:5). The word *stranger* here comes from a Greek word meaning foreign, different, alien, or hostile. Paul warned us of the many voices that are in the world (I Corinthians 14:10). We must have a clear note and a certain sound before we act.

Our day abounds with strange voices and doctrines, with deceivers of every sort and type existing in our time (Ephesians 4:14, Hebrews 12:9). Most are not necessarily cultic or weird teachings; nevertheless, they are totally *different* from biblical truths. Printing presses and media methods pour forth a constant stream of strange doctrines; the voice of strangers is never silent as Satan seeks to lead God's sheep astray.

We must apply sound scriptural principles and deep spiritual perception to every directive in order to determine its origin. We must exercise caution in the smallest of matters

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lest we fall prey to the voice of strangers. Stay close to the Shepherd; hear His voice often. It will be clearly discernable in the din of all other voices.

HOW TO DISCERN GOD'S VOICE

Focusing on God's methodology of speaking will help us discern the Shepherd's voice from the voice of strangers. Some comparative measures that we can take to know what is God's voice are:

1. Compare what you are hearing (whether it be from man or inward impression) with what you have been taught. Never abandon principles of morality, honesty, or integrity instilled in you by your parents or the church. Contemporary peers of each generation pressure God's people to forsake biblical guidelines, scorning them as foolish and out of date; turn a deaf ear to such enticements. Your mind and body can tell you a lot of wrong things and pawn them off as being godly. Take heed at this juncture and remember truths you learned from childhood (Hebrews 2:1-3; II Timothy 1:5; 3:13-17; II Thessalonians 2:15).

2. Compare what you are hearing with past experiences. Recall from the past what was of God and what was the flesh, then act accordingly. Time and experience are great teachers; utilize them for your spiritual welfare and well-being. Quit making the same mistakes over and over; become wise to Satan's wiles and devices.

3. Compare what you are hearing with someone else's experience. Use godly, successful men and women as sounding boards to determine if you are on course or not. Independence and self-centeredness are sure routes to following the wrong voice. Take advantage of the knowledge and expertise of those who have walked the path you are now on. Paul did this in his ministry (Galatians 2:1-2). Samuel had Eli's guidance in discerning God's voice in his hour of youth and crisis (I Samuel 3:1-18). You and I need the wisdom of others.

4. Compare what you are hearing with God's Word. Immediately reject any message or impression contradictory to the Scripture. Anything coming from God will harmonize with the Bible and the spirit of the Word.

Acting impulsively and hastily, especially when there is question, only brings hurt and damage to us and others. A comparative analysis of what we are hearing with these four guidelines will always provide a safety net against failure and deception.

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Much of what is called "of God" is really of humans or Satan. Caution regarding eternal truths and your eternal destiny is always in order. Learn to wait on God. Do not try to rush the situation as Saul did by offering sacrifices when he was not supposed to. Waiting and checking things out are good rules of safety in determining God's voice! To sum it up, be sure it is God's voice, not just your feelings, desires, or impression before you move or act.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MISTAKE GOD'S VOICE

Webster says that a mistake in this context means "1. To perceive or understand erroneously; to interpret or estimate incorrectly; to misunderstand or misapprehend. 2. To recognize or identify incorrectly, to take (one thing or person) for another."

For each of us the consequences of mistaking God's voice varies widely. We can run the gamut from extreme hurt and irreparable damage to minor discomforts when we fail to distinguish the voice of the Shepherd from the voice of strangers. Lives have literally been wrecked because someone listened to the wrong voice. If at some juncture this has happened to you, perhaps these few remarks will bring consolation and new direction to your life. Since none of us is exempt from making this type of mistake, we need to be extremely cautious lest we hurt and destroy others along with ourselves. In our floundering and seeking, there is no reason at any time or place to mistake the clear tones of the Bible. God's written Word is clear, and we must adhere to it. This portion of the lesson addresses areas of our lives where there are no written guidelines.

Note: Willful disobedience to, disregard for, or rebellion against what we know is God's voice is not included here. Balaam was guilty of this type of behavior along with King Saul, Korah, and countless others. If you are suffering because of rebellion against God's directives to you, you only need one word of advice: repent and get on with what God has told you to do. The problem will be solved even if some damage remains.

Although they are not a result of mistaking God's voice, when you encounter severe trials, reversals, financial loss, or poverty while doing the will of God, Satan will try to defeat you by making you think you have missed God's will. Obeying God's voice does not always bring prosperity, progress, and popularity! If you are in God's will and obeying His voice, learn to accept the circumstances and stay true to God in spite of them.

1. **Ministers**—It is naive to think or suggest that every preacher and church has

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made every move in accordance with God's voice and will. Does this mean that we are all out of the will of God and doomed to defeat? No it does not. While God may not have been pleased with your action or what others did, you can still walk pleasing to God. Here are examples:

A. You resigned a church out of the will of God and the church has chosen someone else.
B. You were an evangelist and began pastoring or doing something else out of the will of God.
C. You were voted out of a church and felt you were wronged.
D. You were voted out of an office that you felt God wanted you in.
E. You are in a place or position and feel you should be somewhere else, but there is no opportunity for you to make that change.

If any of the foregoing situations, or one similar, exists in your life, consider the following remedies.

Prayerlessness, stress, flawed judgement, domestic problems, the rebellion of others, along with many other factors could create such a scenario. Whatever the cause, often it cannot be undone. If so, you should: (1) Ask God's forgiveness for your mistake. (2) Allow it to become a learning experience. (3) Forgive those who have hurt you and gone against God's will. (4) Keep bitterness out of your heart toward anyone. (5) Quit kicking yourself and looking back with regret. (6) Make the best of where you are. You can be productive, successful, and please God in the position you now fill. (7) Be ethical toward those who took your place (or the one you want to be in). Never undermine or work against anyone filling a position that you feel God wants you to have. (8) God will ultimately place you where He wills; until then, be your best where you are.

2. **Churches**—When a church as a whole wrongs a minister or leader in any capacity they should collectively repent and make reconciliation to that person. Although the removal of a pastor may not be undone, the hurt should be removed as much as possible. Extreme caution should be exercised by any church before raising their hand against the ministry. Removing a man from the pulpit should be a last resort. Ministers should conduct themselves so there would be no reason for removal.

   Should such an event occur out of the bounds of the Scripture and the will of God, the church should: (1) Make restitution and reconciliation with the pastor they have wronged. (2) Any minister who has been wronged should forgive and get on with his life. (3) Let this be a learning experience and not let it happen again. (4) Accept the pastor they now have and support him and love him as the Scripture teaches. (5) Become a prayerful, soulwinning church with a

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spirit of unity. (6) Understand that the way to solve problems is not by changing pastors but by prayer, repentance, and forgiveness.

3. **Gifts of the Spirit—**If prophecy and interpretations are not of God but come from the spirit of the speaker or speakers, the following should be done: (1) Whoever is in charge should correct the matter if they deem the mistake to be serious and harmful to the congregation present and then proceed with the service, endeavoring to restore a good spirit to the meeting. (2) If it is an immature saint or the mistake was in good faith and in a good spirit and no serious harm is incurred, the leader should instruct the person privately concerning spiritual gifts; the church should forgive and pray for that person. (3) Persons used in the area of spiritual gifts should: (a) be taught by the pastor; (b) learn what the Bible teaches on the subject; (c) be sure God is the author of anything they say in His stead; (d) understand the liberty and limitations placed on the gifts to speak; (e) understand that God allows the hearers to judge the prophecy or interpretation as to whether it is biblical and accurate.

4. **Individuals**—Each of us has the privilege of having God, our Shepherd, speak to us on an individual basis. Should you mistake God's voice in some area of your life, many of the guidelines given to others in this section will help you correct your error and give you direction. Some moves are reversible; others are irreversible. If reversible, be humble enough to admit your mistake, repent, and do what you know is right. When actions are irreversible, accept the consequences and serve God acceptably where you are.

REFLECTIONS

Oh, how I desire that we would always know God's voice and obey it! Our Shepherd wants to lead us to green pastures, but we must first know His voice and then follow Him. If you have, rejoice! If you missed it or made a mistake, all is not lost; the Shepherd still lives, loves, and leads. His voice still calls. Indescribable blessings await those who hear, know, and obey His voice.

> "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
>
> Revelation 3:20

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 6

KNOWING THE VOICE OF GOD

1. Define the word *know* as used in this lesson. _____
2. What is the Greek word for *voice*? _____
   What does it mean? _____
3. List two things that help God's people to know His voice. (A) _____,
   (B)_____.
4. There is a spirit of _____ and a spirit of _____.
   Since this is true we are to _____
   the spirits. Scripture: _____
5. Name three methods through which God speaks to us. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____.
6. What gifts of the spirit are used to speak to us audibily?_____
7. Are all angels God's angels? _____Support your answer
   with Scripture. _____
8. Are all dreams and visions from God?_____ At the end of this worksheet
   write a short essay on why you answered as you did.
9. Write a brief statement about impressions as they relate to knowing the voice of
   God. _____
10. God's people will not follow a _____for they know not the voice
    of _____. Scripture: _____
11. List four ways we can discern God's voice. (A) _____,
    (B) _____, (C) _____, (D) _____.
12. Should past teachings be dropped because someone has a new revelation, or says
    he has heard from God? _____
13. All voices and instructions should be validated by what? _____
14. What should you do if you are willfully or rebelliously going against God's will for
    your life? _____
15. Everyone who does God's will gets rich, is popular, and highly successful.
    T____F_____ Support your answer._____
16. If a minister mistakenly misses the voice of God what should he do? List three

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things. (A)_____,
(B)_____, (C) _____.

17. When a church wrongs a minister, they should do what six things? (A) _____,
(B)_____, (C) _____,
(D) _____, (E) _____,
(F) _____
18. What should be done when spiritual gifts are misused?_____
What preventive measure should be taken to assure this does not happen?_____
19. Individuals who mistake God's voice in their personal affairs should remedy it in what fashion?_____
20. Memorize Revelation 3:20 verbatim. Did you do this? Yes_____ No_____

LESSON 7

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A SCRIPTURAL END-TIME ATTITUDE

MATTHEW 24:1-8; LUKE 21:8-9

Unquestionably, the day in which you and I presently live could rightfully be designated as the end time. Moreover, this term has been applicable since the day of Pentecost when one notes that the apostle Peter referred to Joel's prophecy of the last days (Joel 2:28-29) in Acts 2:16-17. Here Peter declared that this outpouring of the Spirit occurring in the last days was happening right then. If that period was the last days or the beginning of them, surely we who are two thousand years removed from such a day are in the end time.

Present-day signs make it unnecessary and even redundant for one to have to convince us that we are nearing the end. Perhaps some may ask, "The end of what?" I am referring primarily to the end of the church age—an age, era, or dispensation beginning with the birth of the church in Acts 2:1-4 and extending to the catching away of the church (I Corinthians 15:51-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Often we hear the word *rapture* used to describe this glorious event awaiting the church. Although the word *rapture* is not found in the Bible, it is synonymous with other Bible terms in the foregoing references.

When the church is taken out of this world, it will not signal an immediate destruction of the present heavens and earth. Following Christ's catching away of both dead and live saints to meet Him in the air, there will be a time of tribulation as described in Revelation. When Christ defeats the world ruler of the Tribulation known as the beast, He will then bind Satan for one thousand years while He rules and reigns over the entire earth. After one thousand years the present heavens and earth will be destroyed and replaced with a new heaven and earth (Revelation 19:11, 21:1; II Peter 3:3-14). The world as we now know it will end as we are ushered into eternity, with the lost being cast into the lake of fire and the saved enjoying the splendors of the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem.

As intriguing as these future events are, we must find and develop the scriptural attitude that God wants us to have in our day, often referred to as the end time.

THE END TIME

Exponential change has exploded during this century in numerous areas, including knowledge, population, and arsenals of destructive weapons. We can now see how heretofore unclear prophecies of God's Word can and will be fulfilled. Circumstances

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are quickly pushing us toward a world ruler, creating global upheavals and demands relative to such structure. No sensible person questions that our entire population can be destroyed many times over by nuclear weapons. Along with these forboding events, our planet is becoming overpopulated, with hunger, homelessness, and poverty evident almost worldwide.

Into such an age and climate you and I have been thrust; what then are we to do, and how are we to feel, knowing that such impending fate awaits? Not only can we gain this knowledge from the daily news, but God's Word forewarns us of these events, along with our environment witnessing to us these facts.

Since we are in the end time of the church age, I challenge you to study in context passages clearly defining actions, evils, and spirits of this era. Study the following passages, adding others as you go: II Peter 3:3-4; I John 2:18; I Timothy 4:1-6; II Timothy 3:1-17; Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:1-38. Numerous references in both testaments should be studied and correlated together for an understanding of the days in which you now live. Beware of using Scripture out of context relative to the end time.

A PROPER END-TIME ATTITUDE

Stress, fear, and uncertainty are elements that both saints and sinners are subjected to in our times. Heart-related problems are the number one cause of death in America, which could very well be the implication of Jesus' words in Luke 21:26. No doubt this malady will become more severe worldwide during the fulfillment of the events that Jesus described in Luke 21.

Due to the essentiality of our world's stage being set for the catching away of the church and a world ruler rising to dictatorship, certain fear-inducing events must transpire. Without doubt we are in the national and global throes of these developing events. And into this scene God's church is thrust with her mission of reaching the lost while preserving her identity and holiness. With such complexity of events, how then are we to conduct ourselves and with what attitude should we view unfolding circumstances of the end time? Jesus, knowing beforehand the stress such an environment would produce, gave us insight as to how we should approach our day.

In Matthew 24 Jesus answered three questions, and His answers cover a time frame from His day until the end of the world. The questions Jesus answered are found in Matthew 24:3.

1. When shall these things be?

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2. What shall be the sign of thy coming?
3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world?

As Jesus unfolded answers to these questions, many of them produced fear, anxiety, and a troubled countenance for His disciples, and they will do so for any who may witness these occurrences. However, in the midst of these revelations, Jesus portrayed the scriptural attitude that He wanted us to develop and maintain as these things materialize.

"SEE THAT YE BE NOT TROUBLED"
(Matthew 24:6)

Surely the things Jesus had just spoken were of a troubling nature, yet He desired for His people to have a calm, quiet spirit and attitude in the midst of such storm. Luke used the word "terrified" rather than troubled in his Gospel, giving further insight into a proper attitude for such times.

- **Troubled** is defined by the Greek words *throeo* (thro-eh'-o), meaning to clamor or to frighten, and *tarasso* (tar-as'-so), meaning to stir, agitate or roil water.

- **Terrified** comes from the Greek word *ptoeo* (pto-eh'-o), meaning to frighten or scare with the idea of causing to fall.

Knowing that His followers would face the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and that every ensuing generation would encounter stressful times, Jesus gave them and us this scriptural end-time attitude. Simply put, God wants us to be stirred and convicted but not troubled, concerned but not worried, interested but not overwrought. When false prophets, war, famine, pestilence, offences, and abounding iniquity arise, along with other foretold events, we need to call to mind Jesus' admonition not to be troubled. Satan would like nothing better than to get us so terrified and overwrought by present-day circumstances that we forget our real mission and purpose in life.

One of the disciples who heard Jesus' words in Matthew 24 gave an abiding code of conduct for each generation to adhere to:

> "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"
>
> (II Peter 3:11)

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END-TIME DOCTRINES

Since its inception, God's church has been attacked by every devious doctrine that Satan can devise. History records deceitful doctrines of every sort and type. Since we are in the end time it is imperative for us not to get caught up in any teaching contrary to God's Word. Since so much hinges on our being prepared for the return of Christ, one of Satan's tricks is to deceive people relative to Christ's return. Not only will Satan attack us with some devious doctrines, he will also attack us with an internal attitude and spirit with the intention of destroying our awareness and preparedness for Christ's return.

Scripture projects four concepts relative to Christ's second return for the church. Only one of them is proper and right; accept and cleave to it regardless of what Satan or people say:

1. **Jesus Christ Has Already Returned**.
   Paul's admonition for us to study God's Word is in the same context as the reference to this false doctrine. Studying and rightly dividing the truth will reveal such error as Hymenaeus and Philetus were projecting, whether it be in Paul's day or ours. Christ's return for the church has not occurred; it is an event to be believed, preached, and hoped for (II Timothy 2:15-19). Some in Paul's day and ours declare that there is no such thing as a resurrection (I Corinthians 15:12-20); however, God's Word refutes this unfounded doctrine.

2. **Jesus Christ Is Not Coming**.
   Last-day scoffers, walking after their own lusts and willingly ignorant of God's word, will taunt God's people with the question, "Where is the promise of his coming?" (II Peter 3:3-8). Because Christ has not come or did not come in the time frame they designated, they will promulgate the false idea that Jesus Christ is not coming.

3. **Jesus Christ Delays His Coming**.
   This satanic spirit will attack our heart and mind for the express purpose of causing us to slacken our efforts and to destroy our preparedness for His coming. "Jesus is coming, but not now" are words of satanic origin. Beware of such thoughts, whatever day you live in. (Study Matthew 24:48-51; Luke 12:35-48; 21:34-36.)

4. **Jesus Christ Is Coming**.
   This fact, doctrine, and faith embraced by the people of God is the only scriptural foundation upon which to build. When He is coming we dare not say, for we do not know; however, from the housetop we can shout with confidence, "Jesus Christ is coming again!" (Matthew 24:42-47; Mark 13:32-37; Hebrews 9:27-28; 10:34-37; II Timothy 4:18).

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Be on guard against any doctrine relative to the coming of the Lord that is not supported strongly in the Scripture. Fads, predictions, date setting, etc., have been a part of the scene since the days of the apostles and will exist until the end of time. When you encounter such, manifest the end-time attitude that Jesus gave: "See that ye be not troubled."

END-TIME DISTRACTIONS

Accompanying the events that God's Word foretells and the foregoing false doctrines relative to Christ's coming, will be other distractions to trouble us. Since Christ wants us to live quiet, untroubled, serene lives in the midst of end-time storms, we must not allow the following things to distract or trouble us. When such disturbing occurrences develop, God's Word instructs us how to handle them. (Refer to the definition of *troubled* and *terrified* at this point.)

1. Paul's day, as well as ours, was distracted and troubled by the espousal of what Paul called "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9). Any teaching appearing on the scene should either (1) be established as biblical and then taught and obeyed, or (2) be rejected as unscriptural and then taught against and refused.

   When the early church faced a dilemma over circumcision, they settled the matter quickly so that the body of Christ would not be troubled (Acts 15:24).

2. Some think a forged letter was sent to Thessalonica under the guise of being from Paul. In any case, apparently some type spirit, rumor, or letter had affected the Thessalonican church (II Thessalonians 2:1-17). Paul laid to rest this disconcerting matter. He established that before the day of Christ (not the second return of Christ for the church) can come, certain events, which he clearly outlined, must transpire.

   Our day is rife with those who discover the beast in every popular world leader, set dates for Christ's return, scare people with every Middle East development, interpret treaties as ultimate final signs, make computers the beast, use every 666 they see to frighten people, take the alignment of planets and the greenhouse effect as the final sign of His return, juggle dates, numbers and Bible verses to fit their whim and predictions—on and on the parade of deceivers march. We must preach clearcut Bible signs and truths, but playing on emotions and using scare tactics only produce the attitude—trouble—that

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Jesus does not want us to have in this end time. As a result of such antics, people are disillusioned and discouraged and discredit the ministry.

Christ is coming; heaven is real! He does save from sin. These and other precious truths are indisputable—dare we preach less? Need we more?

3. Persecution and suffering was the lot of the New Testament believers along with many succeeding generations. Apparently some allowed the distractions of their day to remove them from the faith. Opposition and conflict create an environment that is disconcerting and troubling to the saint of God. However, when a child of God suffers for righteousness sake, he is to count himself blessed. He is not to be ashamed or troubled, for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon him (I Peter 3:14-17; 2:20-21; 4:14-16).

4. Before Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, His disciples became troubled over the future. Most assuredly we can relate to that. In view of the coming events relative to His ascension and their facing life without Him in the flesh, Jesus calmed their fears as He exhorted them to believe in Him and His return, and then described what awaited them in the future (John 14:1-7).

   Christ's ascension (which had to occur in order for us to receive the Comforter or Holy Ghost), His preparation of an eternal abode for His people, and His coming again, should all remove every troubling spirit from our heart and mind.

   Many other things can cause our hearts to be troubled, whether it be one of the foregoing or some other devious ploy of Satan. Let us heed Paul's advice:

> "And to you who are troubled rest with us."
>
> (II Thessalonians 1:7)

END-TIME POSITION OF THE CHURCH

Along with committing our lives to Christ in whatever day we live, we are not to be troubled over current events. Instead, we are to:

1. Use the talents that Christ has given us to our fullest potential while awaiting His return (Matthew 25:14-30).

2. Take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (dissipation), drunkenness, and cares of this life (Luke 21:34-35).

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3. Remain alert, watchful, and looking for our Lord's return (Matthew 25:1-13).

4. Watch and pray for these two important things to develop in our lives (Luke 21:36).
   A. That we may be accounted worthy to escape the things coming upon the earth.
   B. That we may be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of man.

5. Occupy (to busy oneself) until He comes (Luke 19:12-27).

6. Remain patient until His coming, constantly watching and awaiting His return (Hebrews 9:28; James 5:7-8; Titus 2:13).

7. Be overcomers of the world, flesh, and devil. Study God's seven promises of future rewards to the overcomer. They shall:
   A. Eat of tree of life (Revelation 2:7).
   B. Not be hurt by the second death (Revelation 2:11).
   C. Eat of hidden manna and be given a white stone (Revelation 2:17).
   D. Be given power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).
   E. Be clothed in white raiment; not have name blotted out of the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).
   F. Be made a pillar in the temple of God (Revleation 3:12).
   G. Be granted to sit with the Lord in His throne (Revelation 3:21).

   Numerous scriptural instructions abound relative to the position of God's church as she awaits the return of the bridegroom. Perhaps these seven will prove that God wants us to be busy in His work and unhampered by events of the end time.

REFLECTIONS

God's Word is distinct in telling us what our attitude should be during emerging crises peculiar to the end time. Never should we get so caught up in future events that we forget the present and fail in our mission. Much of what happens will be beyond our control; we cannot change the present or future by worrying and being troubled over it (Matthew 6:25-34). Troubled minds and spirits occupied with current events have no room for noble ideas, plans, and goals to take root and grow.

Gloom and doom are so prevalent in some minds until they fear to begin a family, build a house, plant a crop, or hope for any worthwhile achievements. Remember, God still rules in the kingdom of people (Daniel 5:21). If we observe the wind and clouds we will

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never sow or reap. Now is the time to cast our bread on the waters and busy ourselves in the king's work as we await His return (Ecclesiastes 11:1-4).

When the outlook is troubling, look up, "for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 7

A SCRIPTURAL END-TIME ATTITUDE

1. Simon Peter called the outpouring of the Holy Ghost an event of the last days.
   T _____ F _____
2. *End time* in this lesson refers primarily to what? _____
3. What is the end-time attitude that Jesus told us to have? _____
4. Define these words: Troubled _____
   Terrified _____
5. List four doctrines relative to Christ's coming. (A) _____,
   (B) _____, (C) _____,
   (D) _____
6. Which one of the four is right? _____
   Support your answer with a brief summary at the end of this worksheet.
7. What is the date of Christ's return? _____Support your answer with Scripture.
   _____
8. Name the thing troubling the Galatian church. _____
9. The Thessalonian church was troubled by _____.
10. When we suffer for righteousness' sake we should _____.
11. Jesus admonished us, "Let not your hearts be _____."
12. Paul instructed the troubled to _____. Scripture:
    _____.
13. Our hearts are not to be overcharged with (A) _____,
    (B) _____, (C) _____.
14. We are to watch and pray for what two important things to happen to us?
    (A) _____, (B) _____.
    Scripture: _____
15. What does the word *occupy* mean? _____
16. Unto them that _____for Him will appear the second time without
    unto salvation. Scripture: _____

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17. How many promises are given to overcomers in Revelation 2-3? _____
18. What two things will overcomers be given to eat? (A) _____(B) _____
19. Jesus told us to do what, relative to tomorrow? (Matthew 6:34)._____
20. In your own words explain what Ecclesiastes 11:1-4 means._____

LESSON 8

NOTES:

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING CONCERNING HAIR

I CORINTHIANS 11:1-16

Much of the church world has largely ignored I Corinthians 11, except for the portion about communion. While I am a strong advocate for observing communion (see Volume I, lesson 36), I am also a strong contender for understanding and adhering to Paul's teaching on hair. Both subjects (communion and hair) are addressed in the same chapter to the same people. If one portion is applicable to our day, would not the other be also? Should we not at least examine such a basic topic as hair, since we have, or have had, hair on our heads? Fixing or arranging our hair is one of the most time-consuming things we do relative to good grooming. Since God's Word deals with the subject so extensively, surely God expects His ministers to address the matter to His people.

Before passing off the topic as irrelevant, unimportant, or uninteresting, remember that God calls our attention to this topic. Whatever your opinion, past history, or concept regarding your hair, will you give God, through His Word, a chance to speak to you on this topic as you have on others? Tradition, pride, or personal opinion regarding our hair must be subjected to what God says. Why God demands of us what He does is beyond our human comprehension. His ways are not our ways, nor do our thoughts coincide with his; nevertheless, we must subject our will to His and follow Him regardless of how foreign it may be to our way of thinking (Isaiah 55:8-11).

God's Word has much to say about our hair in relation to obedience and keeping the commandments of God. Both the Old and New Testaments abound with references to men and women's hair. Certainly He has an interest in our hair if He numbers each of the hairs on our head (Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7).

Due to the extensiveness of the subject at hand, this lesson will only furnish a basic outline with limited comments on most points. We will furnish enough information for you to understand this lesson; however, we will only present major points and issues while leaving minor points and issues to personal study.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO HAIR

While we will refer to numerous facts from the Old Testament, our main emphasis will be on what the New Testament says relative to hair.

NOTES:

1. Leprosy was determined by interrelated problems involving hair (Leviticus 13-14).

2. The Nazarite vow had several related restrictions concerning hair (Numbers 6:1-21).

   A. Scripture mentions three Nazarites:

      1. Samson—Judges 13:5, 16:17
      2. Samuel—I Samuel 1:11
      3. John the Baptist—Luke 1:15

      The Bible does not specifically call Samuel and John Nazarites, their mothers made vows relating to the restrictions of Nazarites.

   B. Jesus was not a Nazarite. He was a Nazarene, meaning He was from Nazareth.

   C. Nazarite vows are not applicable or acceptable under the New Testament dispensation of grace. Such vows, if practiced in our day, could violate Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 11:14.

3. High priests along with other ministering priests (those ministering in the Tabernacle) used material head coverings (Leviticus 21:9-15; 8:9,13; 10:6; Exodus 39:27-29). Certain events restricted them from uncovering their head. *Uncover* here comes from the Hebrew word *para* (paw-rah'), meaning to loosen, to expose, dismiss, absolve, bare, make naked, uncover. The Hebrew word *pera* (peh-rah) means the hair (as dishevelled), locks.

4. Under the law of jealousies, the accused woman was to have her head uncovered (Numbers 5:18).

   Other renderings of this passage are: (A) "Let the hair of the woman's head go loose."[1] (B) "Bare the woman's head."[2] (C) "Shall uncover the head of the woman."[3] (D) "Shave the woman's head."[4] (E) "Shall let her hair down."[5] (F) "Shall uncover her head."[6] (G) "Shall unbind her hair."[7]

5. A leper was to put a covering upon his upper lip and cry, "Unclean, Unclean" (Leviticus 13:45). Covering here is the Hebrew word *atah* (aw-taw') meaning to wrap, cover, veil, clothe, array self, be clad, or put on. Was this his hand, a veil, shawl, or a mustache grown as a mark of uncleanness and separation from the congregation?

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Other renderings of this passage are: (A) "His head shall be left bare and he shall cover his upper lip."[8] (B) "His head uncovered; and let him have a covering put upon his mouth."[9] (C) "The hair of his head shall go loose, and he shall cover his upper lip."[10] (D) "The hair of his head shall go loose and he shall cover his upper lip."[11] (E) "The hair on his head worn loose; he must cover his mustache."[12] (F) "His hair disordered; he must shield his upper lip."[13]

6. A Jewish man marrying a non-Jewish captive of war was to shave her head (Deuteronomy 21:10-14).

7. Absalom, a rebellious young man, polled or cut his hair only once a year (II Samuel 14:26).

8. Various isolated instances are recorded of a man using a material or garment covering for his head or face. These were special, unusual occurrences and not a custom, biblical teaching, or traditional practice kept by everyone.

   A. Ezekiel put a turban on his head (Ezekiel 24:15-21).
   B. Moses put a veil over his face (Exodus 34:32-35; II Corinthians 3:13-16).
   C. Elijah wrapped his face in a mantle (I Kings 19:13).
   D. David, in fleeing from Absalom, covered his head (II Samuel 15:30-32).
   E. Haman covered his head (Esther 6:12).
   F. Jeremiah mentioned the Jews covering their heads in a time of famine (Jeremiah 14:1-4).

9. Nebuchadnezzar's long hair was a result of God's judgment against him, showing God's disfavor (Daniel 4:33).

10. Hair is used symbolically in both testaments to convey a truth; express sorrow, pleasure, or displeasure; or as a statement of protection (Jeremiah 7:29; Daniel 3:27; 7:9; Acts 27:34; Revelation 6:12; 9:8; 1:14; Hosea 7:9; Psalm 69:4; I Kings 1:52).

11. We are not to swear by our head, since we cannot make one hair white or black (Matthew 5:36).

12. A woman in Jesus' time washed His feet with tears and dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50).

13. New Testament women are not to braid or plait into their hair gold or gaudy items (I Timothy 2:9; I Peter 3:3).

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14. Veils are first mentioned in Genesis 24:65 in connection with Rebekah. Tamar covered herself with a veil (Genesis 38:12-19). A veil is also mentioned in Song of Solomon 5:7.

While veils or mantles were used in ancient times, there is not one scriptural hint or evidence that they were worn as an adherence to God's Word. Veils in some cultures were customarily and traditionally worn, but not on the basis of Scripture.

Under God's written law to Moses, not one verse of Scripture commands, instructs, or suggests that veils should be worn.

> The use of the face veil as a regular article of dress was unknown to the Hebrew women, and if "veil" is to be understood in Canticles 4:1, etc., it was worn as an ornament only. The modern oriental custom of veiling is due to Mohammedan influence and has not been universally adopted by Jewesses in the Orient. In New Testament times, however, among both Greeks and Romans, reputable women wore a veil in public and to appear without it was an act of bravado (or worse).[14]

Cross-referencing the subject of hair, covering, mantle, veil, etc. in a lesson of this type is impossible due to space. Following through on every reference will enhance your knowledge of the subject as well as prove the validity and contextual fairness of this study.

INTRODUCTION TO I CORINTHIANS 11

Paul introduced two symbolisms of great importance to the New Testament church in this outstanding chapter. They are:

1. **Hair**—as a symbol of a woman's submission to her husband when it is uncut and as a symbol of a man's submission to Christ when he cuts his hair.

2. **Bread and Fruit of the Vine**—as symbols of the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

The bread and fruit of the vine are not the actual body and blood of the Lord; they are only symbols of it. Bread and the fruit of the vine are real substances; however, in this instance both are used symbolically.

NOTES:

Our hair, while a real item and object, is a symbol of submission. Although hair itself is not submission, it does symbolize submission when the believer keeps God's Word relative to hair.

Paul further addressed three important areas of relationship in the matter of women not cutting their hair.

1. **Headship**—The head of Christ is God, the head of the man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man. While the text refers to a woman's physical head, it also speaks of her husband as her head.

2. **Creation**—In the initial creative act, woman came from the man (verse 8); the woman was created for the man (verse 9). However, the man does not exist without the woman, nor the woman without the man (verse 11). The woman is of the man, and the man is of the woman, and both are from God (verse 12). The creative process required the man Christ Jesus to be submissive to God (His Father), the man to be submissive to Christ, and the woman to be submissive to the man.

3. **Angels**—correlation exists not only between women's hair and her headship, but also between woman's hair and the angels. God's church manifests to heavenly powers (angels included) His wisdom (Ephesians 3:10). A woman's authority to manifest this is lost when she cuts her hair.

FACTS ESTABLISHED IN I CORINTHIANS 11

A careful study of I Corinthians 11:1-16 brings to light several indisputable facts worthy of our attention. Other facts exist in this passage; however, these are the major ones.

1. Paul admonished us to follow him as he followed Christ, thus establishing a biblical principle of telling us to follow a man only as he follows Christ (verse 1).

2. He gave personal praise for keeping the ordinances (often rendered "tradition") delivered to the believers (verse 2).

3. He established the principle of headship (verse 3).

4. A man who prays or prophesies having his head covered dishonors his head (verse 4).

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5. A woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head and is equal to, or the same as, if she were shaven (verse 5).

6. For a woman to be uncovered is equivalent to being shorn. Being shorn, shaven, or uncovered is a shame. She is to be covered (verse 6).

7. Man is the image and glory of God and should not cover his head (verse 7).

8. Initial creation produced woman for the man; she is of, or from, the man and was created for the man (verse 8 -9).

9. A woman's covering is noticed by the angelic realm (verse 10).

10. After the initial creation, the procreation process now causes man to be of the woman and the woman of the man, thus establishing an interdependence (verse 11-12).

11. It is uncomely (unbecoming, indecent, shameful, unseemly) for a woman to pray unto God uncovered (verse 13).

12. Nature, the force that causes love for offspring, and teaches us to nourish and care for them and ourselves, taught the Corinthians, and us, that long hair is a shame to a man (verse 14).

13. Long hair is a glory to a woman; her hair is given her for a covering. Here is the meaning, definition, and determination of what type covering Paul referred to (verse 15).

14. "Contentious" comes from the Greek word *philoneikos* (fil-on'-i-kos) meaning fond of strife, disputations (*neikos*—a quarrel). Corinth or any other church would not and should not accept such rebellion. Paul did not negate all he had said in the first 15 verses by using one verse to say "if you don't want to obey, be contentious and all is well." In Romans 2:6-9, God pronounced judgment upon contentious people (verse 16).

WHO WAS I CORINTHIANS 11 ADDRESSED TO?

According to the author, Paul, I Corinthians was addressed not only to the church at Corinth but to all who call upon the name of Jesus Christ in *every place* (I Corinthians 1:1-2). Paul further stated in I Corinthians 14:37, "the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

NOTES:

We cannot pawn off Paul's teaching as regional, historical, or a personal tangent relevant to custom and personal prejudice. It is timeless, relevant, and universal in application to all saints. It is God's inerrant Word, a matter by which we will be judged, and a code of conduct by which we must presently live!

DEFINITION OF TERMS RELATIVE TO HAIR

Paul's use of certain words and terms must be defined in context if we are to understand I Corinthians 11. The following definitions are from Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* and Webster's *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*. We refer to other words in order to ensure clarity, proper translation, and contextual harmony. Further defining of these terms is interesting, and I encourage you to do so.

- **Shorn**—(Greek) *keiro* (ki'-ro) to shear.
  Webster: *Shorn* is the past participle of shear. *Shear*: 1. To use a cutting tool as shears in trimming or cutting wool, metal, shrubbery, etc. 2. To come apart or break under the action of shearing stress. 3. To cut with shears or a similar sharp-edged instrument. 4. To remove (the hair, wool etc.) by cutting or clipping. Tenses—shear, sheared, sheared or shorn.

- **Covered**—(Greek) *katakalupto* (kat-ak-al-oop'-to): to cover wholly, veil, cover, hide.
  kalupto (kal-oop'-to): to cover up, cover, hide.
  kata (kat-ah'): down, out of measure, mightily or more.
  krupto (kroop'-to): to conceal by covering, hide, keep secret.

- **Covering**—(Greek) *peribolaion* (per-ib-ol-ah'-yon): something thrown around one, a mantle, veil, covering, vesture.
  (Hebrew)—*atah* (aw-taw'): to wrap, cover, veil, clothe, array self, be clad, cover, fill, put on.

- **Uncover**—(Hebrew) *para* (paw-rah'): to loosen, expose, dismiss, absolve, bare, make naked, uncover.
  pera (peh-rah): the hair, as dishevelled locks. (Although these are Old Testament terms, I included them since this lesson refers to the text where they appear.

- **Uncovered—**(Greek) *akatakaluptos* (ak-at-ak-a-loop'-tos): unveiled or uncovered.

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- **Shaven—**(Greek) *xurao* (yoo-rah'-o): a razor to shave or shear the hair, shave.

- **Dishonoreth—**(Greek) *kataischuno* (kat-ahee-skhoo'-no): to shame down, disgrace, put to the blush, confound, dishonor.

- **Shame—**two Greek words are used in defining this word:
  (A) *aischron* (ahee-skhron'): a shameful thing, indecorum
  (B) *atima* (at-ee-mee'-ah): infamy, comparative indignity, disgrace, dishonor, reproach, shame, vileness.

- **Nature—**(Greek) *phusis* (foo'-sis): natural production, native disposition, constitution, or usage. Webster: 1. inborn character, innate disposition, inherent tendencies of a person. 2. any or all of the instincts, drives, desires, appetites, etc. of a person.

- **Comely—**(Greek) *prepo* (prep'-o): to be suitable or proper, fit or right.

QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Without an open forum available to us, it is impossible to answer all questions pertaining to this subject. However, for the sake of clarity, we will address some pertinent questions and considerations.

Since the topic of hair touches every individual's life, it is important for us to adhere to what God's Word teaches about hair. Before we pawn off this lesson as unimportant, saying that God is not interested in what we do about our hair, let us investigate it prayerfully.

1. Paul used the word *covering* extensively in I Corinthians 11. What is this covering, in reference to hair? Are there two kinds or types of coverings in this chapter? Do verses 4-10 refer to material coverings or garment veils? Is hair referred to as a covering separate and apart from, or in conjunction with, veils? Is the covering of I Corinthians 11 used consistently and impartially for both men and women?

   Paul clearly defined in I Corinthians 11:15 what type covering he referred to for both men and women. Hair, not garment veils, scarves, mantles, kerchiefs, or hats, is the covering referred to in *all* of I Corinthians 11. Garment coverings and hair combined are not in view in this chapter as a covering. One or

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the other (veils or hair) must be determined as the covering. It is distinct and unquestionable that hair, and hair alone, is the covering Paul referred to.

2. What does it mean to be shorn? (See definitions).

   Any effort to cut, bite, break off, burn, use permanents, etc. as a means of shortening the hair violates the Word and its spirit—they are wrong when used to purposefully shorten women's hair.

3. What does Scripture teach concerning veils?

   As previously noted in this lesson, veils worn by women are mentioned three times in the Bible. Not one Old or New Testament passage commands, instructs, teaches, or suggests that a woman wear a veil as a covering or as an act to please God. Veils are a cultural, regional, and national custom of some; however, their usage is not predicated upon Scripture. While the wearing of veils is not sinful or contradictory to Scripture, neither does the Scripture command that they be worn.

4. Here are ten reasons why Paul was not referring to veils or a garment covering for the head in I Corinthians 11:

   A. Teaching women to wear veils over their hair, that both are essential, and that without a veil they are not covered, contradicts I Corinthians 11:15 and in effect establishes two coverings for the woman.
   B. Wearing a veil over cut hair would not constitute a biblical covering.
   C. Veils, hats, shawls, etc. are not sinful if worn by a woman; however, they are not required by the Scriptures.
   D. If a veil is an essential covering for a woman, she would be unable to pray or prophesy unless she had one on her head.
   E. Veils, if required, are essential when entering the supernatural realm. Our hair, without a veil on top, will suffice in normal, everyday affairs if such teaching is in fact true.
   F. Veils, if required, would supersede the natural covering of uncut hair.
   G. Does wearing a veil indicate submission, or uncut hair on a woman? Hair does, according to the Bible.
   H. If a material or garment covering is the only covering referred to in I Corinthians 11, how then could someone cut, shear, or shave it?
   I. Veils or manmade garments of some type would become a woman's glory rather than her hair, if they constitute a covering.
   J. Teaching that veils are a biblical covering for a woman promotes the cutting of the hair (the natural covering). Such exegesis of the Scripture is flawed.

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5. How long is long hair on a woman?

   After conversion a woman who does not cut her hair has long hair. Length specifications are not found in the Bible—only that a woman's hair be uncut after she is born again.

6. Principles applied to Christians concerning hair.

   A. If a woman allows her hair to grow she becomes covered. The symbolism of submission is fulfilled as she allows her hair to grow.
   B. If a man allows his hair to grow he becomes covered. He must keep cutting his hair since God requires a man to be uncovered.
   C. God wants a distinction of the sexes. During some periods of time men's hair may not have been styled as it is today, but there was always a marked distinction between men and women just as there should be in our day and each succeeding generation.

7. How is a woman to fix her hair?

   A. It is to remain uncut.
   B. It is not to be plaited or braided with gold or gaudy ornaments (I Timothy 2:9; I Peter 3:3).
   C. Excessive hairstyles that are worldly, prideful, etc. are to be avoided.
   D. Either put up or hanging down is permissible. If down it should be neat, clean, controlled, and out of the face. If up, it should not be gaudy or excessive in size. If your pastor or church encourages you to wear your hair arranged up, strive to obey, showing a good spirit and attitude.
   E. Hats or veils may be worn but are not required by the Scripture.
   F. Hair pieces are not wrong if used in hair that has become thin or for foundation pieces. To produce gaudy, excessive hairstyles with them is unacceptable.
   G. Dying the hair is unacceptable since it is cosmetic and falls into the category of face paint and other cosmetics.

      Arrangements, styles, and ways which women fix their hair are constantly changing. This within itself is acceptable and proper so long as it does not become excessive or a matter of sinful pride. Self-respect should cause us to have a neat hairstyle).

8. Biblical principles and guidelines relative to men's hair.

   A. It should be kept cut over the ears, eyes, and collar.

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B. Long hair connects us to an undesirable element.
C. Beards, mustaches, long sideburns, or long hair should not be worn when they identify us with an undesirable element in our society.
D. Hair pieces are not sinful if kept at a length commensurate with Bible standards. Men should not dye their hair, since this is strictly cosmetic.
E. Perms, foolish configurations cut in the hair, and silly hairstyles have no place among Christian men.
F. Style is not specified—only that it be short. However, any good Christian man will not follow the trend and style of movie stars, rock groups, homosexuals, etc.

Both nature and the Scripture teach men not to have long hair. God's Word is silent concerning how they should wear their hair; however, it is clear that God wants a marked distinction between men and women, and hair is one item denoting such distinctions. While styles and customs have changed, God has not, and all Christian men should keep their hair cut and groomed in a distinctive and identifying manner.

Beards and or mustaches have been worn in some cultures and periods of history without any connotation of rebellion or any connection to an undesirable element of society. During the past several decades facial hair in the United States of America became a mark of identity with the wrong crowd or an act of rebellion. By no means do all people who wear facial hair fit in this category, but since it *could* identify them with such, Christian men should refrain from wearing facial hair under these circumstances.

9. "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels" (I Corinthians 11:10). Paul unquestionably connected women's hair with angels. Several interpretations are available:

A. We have a salvation that angels desire to look into (I Peter 1:12).
B. Christ manifests His wisdom to the principalities and powers (angels) in heavenly places by the church (Ephesians 3:7-11).
C. Someday we will judge angels (I Corinthians 6:2-3).
D. Angels minister to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).
E. Angels bear us up over stones—will they, if we rebel? (Psalm 91:11-12).
F. Fallen angels were caused by rebellion—Christian women become subject to these evil spirits when they lose power on their head by cutting their hair (Matthew 25:41).

10. Can I be contentious and cut my hair if I am a woman, or let it grow if I am a man and still be acceptable to God?

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A. God would not give us fifteen verses of explicit instructions on a matter so important and then negate these instructions with one verse. Such an interpretation could not possibly be consistent with Bible hermeneutics.
B. Refer to the definition of the word *contentious* given earlier in this lesson. God's judgment and sentence against the contentious should cause us to be obedient—not contentious (Romans 2:6-9).

11. Remember, ladies, your hair is a spiritual covering as well as a physical entity. Shortening your hair by some human means, although you may be able to hide it, causes the following:

A. Promotes hypocrisy.
B. Uncovers you and prohibits you from praying or prophesying properly.
C. Condemns you, because you have tampered with your glory.
D. Indicates rebellion and lack of submission to your husband or father as well as Jesus Christ.
E. Causes loss of power before the angels.
F. Is the same as if you were shaven.
G. Is a shame to you.

12. For a man to have long hair causes the following:

A. Indicates his dishonor to Christ as his head.
B. Prohibits his praying or prophesying properly, because his head is covered.
C. Becomes a shame to him.
D. Denotes rebellion against nature and Scripture.
E. Crosses sexual barriers and distinctions, creating a loss of his spiritual identity before God.
F. Condemns him before God by both nature and the Scripture.
G. Renders him, in the eyes of God, as being covered. Women alone should have this status.

13. Some teach strongly against a woman cutting her hair and that furthermore she should have a second covering of a veil or her hair arranged on top of her head. Others interpret I Corinthians 11 as embracing all three of the elements (1) uncut hair, (2) hair arranged on top of the head—not hanging down, and (3) a veil of some type on top of that. Then and only then do women actually become covered according to such teachings. While those who promote such teachings only from the purest of motives, are sincere, upon close examination they are not consistent with the Scriptures.

A. Although a woman was rendered uncovered, apparently by letting her hair hang loose in Numbers 5:18, this in no way transfers into I Corinthians 11

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as a teaching for women to place their hair on top of their heads. Uncut hair is the covering of I Corinthians 11 and not the type or style of arrangement. Teaching hair arrangement as a covering rather than the hair itself does injustice to Scripture and would promote cutting off any hair not needed in completing the said arrangement.

Applying this principle to men would mean that a man may wear his hair long so long as he does not arrange it on top of his head. Keeping his hair long, down, and flowing renders him uncovered according to this interpretation. Again, such an idea is scripturally unfounded. Hair is the covering, and a man is not to be covered; therefore, he must keep cutting his hair.

B. If a hat, veil, shawl, etc., constitutes a biblical covering, then a man must never wear a hat of any sort. A hat does not constitute a covering, so it is not wrong for men or women to wear hats if they so choose. To remain uncovered, a man must keep his hair cut; to remain covered a woman must not cut her hair.

C. If hair is not the biblical covering that God wants, then a woman may cut off any or all her hair or even shave her head so long as she wears a man-made head covering. Paul refuted such an idea and plainly established that hair and hair only is the covering that God desires (I Corinthian 11:15).

D. While the word *covering* can mean a veil or mantle, this meaning or definition cannot apply in I Corinthians since Paul declared that a woman's hair is given her for a covering (I Corinthians 11:15). Moreover, if hair is not consistently used as the definitive term for covering, then we are at a loss to properly define what a biblical covering is. God's Word is distinct, and contextual clarity is evident in this case as much or more than other places; therefore, we must be consistent in our application of it. Consequently, we can conclude from both a definitive and contextual standpoint that hair is the veil, mantle, wrap, vesture, or covering of I Corinthians 11.

REFLECTIONS

We have made very effort to show clearly from the Word of God the importance and essentiality of women not cutting their hair and men keeping theirs cut. Nothing is intended here to criticize, belittle, or destroy cultural or regional teachings different from those where the author resides. I have no qualms about veils or hair arranged on top of the head; however, I believe only one biblical covering exists for both men and

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women and that is hair. Clearly from the Scripture we can see how God wants women covered and men uncovered.

However inconvenient or out of style these requirements may be, if we are to please God our only alternative is to teach and practice them.

Only in recent years has short hair become vogue for American women and long hair for the men. I plead with all true, Bible-believing Christians to refrain from following the unbiblical fads of society and return to established biblical truths. Women, your long hair is a glory to you. Why cut off any of the one thing that God Himself declares to be your glory? Men, if you have long hair it is a shame to you! Why shame yourself by such a needless practice as wearing even borderline long hair?

God's plan is unique for us; when we adhere to it, we become His epistles known and read of all men and His ambassadors to a lost world. I challenge you to continue in the ordinances of I Corinthians 11 and commend you for your untiring efforts in striving to obey them.

ENDNOTES

[1]J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (London, England: Soncino Press, l987), 590.

[2]The Jewish Publication Society, *Tanakh—A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Hebrew Text* (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, l985), 213.

[3]Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, l851), 179.

[4]George M. Lamsa, *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1933), 159.

[5]Curtis Vaughn, *Twenty-six Translations of the Bible* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, l985), 1:462.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]*Tanakh*, 174.

[9]*Septuagint*, 144.

[10]*Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 465.

[11]*Twenty-six Translations of the Bible*, 381.

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[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]James Orr, ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., l939), 5:3047.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 8

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING CONCERNING HAIR

1. What disease in the Old Testament was often determined by hair? _____ Scripture. _____
2. Name three men who were Nazarites. (A)_____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
3. Was Jesus a Nazarite? _____
4. Is there a verse or inference in either Testament requiring women to wear veils? _____ If so where? _____
5. What are the two symbols Paul used in I Corinthians 11? (A) _____, (B) _____
6. Hair symbolizes what? _____
7. What three areas did Paul address relative to women not cutting their hair? (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
8. A man who prays or prophesies having his head covered _____ his head.
9. A woman who prays or prophesies with her head covered _____ her head, and it is the same as if she were_____. Scripture. _____
10. For a woman to have long hair it is a _____to her.
11. A woman's_____ is given her for a _____. Scripture: _____
12. Who is I Corinthians 11 addressed to? _____
13. Define shorn: _____
14. Define covering: _____; uncover: _____.
15. What does the Bible say about veils? _____
16. Give three reasons why I Corinthians 11 does not refer to veils. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
17. How would you define long hair on a woman? _____ On a man? _____

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18. What does it mean for a woman to have power on her head because of angels? (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
19. Write a short summary on being contentious. What does it mean? _____ _____.
20. Give a brief synopsis from this lesson on how a woman should wear her hair and how a man should wear his. Deal with women not cutting their hair versus men cutting theirs.

LESSON 9

NOTES:

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

PROVERBS 22:17-21

J. T. Payne, an outstanding Bible scholar and teacher, who pastored many years in Porterdale, Georgia, passed from this life on October 7, l987. Shortly after his death the following note was found in his Bible:

> Trust is a dimension beyond faith. Faith will see miracles, but trust will carry you through when you can't understand why faith didn't work. Not always can faith deliver from the den of lions, but it's trust that will be able to keep you. Not only faith will deliver you from the valley of shadow of death, but trust will carry you through the valley.

Upon sharing with me the events surrounding Brother Payne's death from cancer, Sister Payne gave me a copy of this note she had found in his Bible.

From this brief but powerful message I was inspired and motivated to study and write on the subject of trust. Realizing the value of acquiring this essential position in and toward Christ, I purposed to learn more about trusting God. Allow me to share with you what I have learned and what I believe about this vital element that we all need.

WHAT IS TRUST?

Since our subject appears in both testaments, let us look at the root words that are translated by our English word *trust*.

HEBREW TERMS

1. **Chacah** (khaw-saw'): to flee for protection, to confide in, have hope, to make refuge.
2. **Batach** (baw-takh'): to hie for refuge, be confident or sure, and hope.
3. **Yachal** (yaw-chal'): to wait, be patient, hope, tarry, to stay.

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4. **Mibtach** (mih-tawkh'): a refuge, security, assurance, confidence, and hope.
5. **Machceh** (makh-seh'): a shelter, hope, or refuge.

GREEK TERMS

1. **Elpizo** (el-pid'-zo): to expect or confide, to hope.
2. **Peitho** (pi'-tho): to convince, pacify, or conciliate, to rely, believe, have confidence, and make a friend.
3. **Pisteuo** (pist-yoo'-o): to have faith, entrust (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ), believe, commit, to put in trust with.
4. **Pepoithesis** (pep-oy'-thay-sis): reliance, confidence, and trust.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY

1. Confidence; a reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle of another person or thing.
2. One who or that which is trusted.
3. Something entrusted to a person; a charge, duty, etc.

When we examine these terms and definitions, it becomes clear that trust is an ingredient in life that we all want to acquire. Since trust is a learned art and we need to be taught how to trust, pursue with me this valuable commodity.

LEARNING TO TRUST

Trust is not an inherent characteristic or trait of humans. Due to Adam's fall, which subsequently plunged us all in the abyss of sin, people inherently distrust. Why? Simply because Satan has lied to us about both spiritual and physical death. Nothing creates distrust quicker than deceit, and this is exactly what happened to Adam and Eve along with the rest of the human race. Satan deceived them.

One of Satan's greatest ploys and most effective tactics is to cause people not to trust God. In essence he says, "You can't believe what God says!" To Eve he said, "Ye shall not surely die," although God had emphatically stated otherwise (Genesis 3:1-5). Listening to Satan results in blatant distrust toward everything and everybody.

From such nature and background, God has worked with humans and produced a plan whereby they can learn to trust again. In such a frame of reference it becomes unquestionable that God's Word can be depended upon, whereas Satan's cannot. Through the

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maze of satanic influence, we must somehow learn the invaluable lesson of trust.

While there are many avenues through which we may acquire trust in God, three major ones are at our disposal:

1. **God's Word—**Studying the track record of someone or something in which we can possibly trust, can become a basis for our decision. After examining some things, we know they are not worthy of our trust, whereas others build confidence in our heart and mind. The Bible is one of the most valuable instructors available to teach us how and whom to trust.

   Proverbs 22:17-21 establishes steppingstones to trust.
   A. We are to lend our ear and hear the words of the wise. Hearing God's Word is a prerequisite to faith; and faith is a prerequisite to trust. First, in our journey we must hear God's Word.
   B. Next we are to apply our hearts to God's knowledge. Truth must enter into our heart and be believed and accepted as fact (verse 17).
   C. Retention of the Word is essential; we must keep it within and hide it in our heart (verse 18).
   D. "They shall withal be fitted in thy lips" (verse 18). We must then speak God's Word verbally and mentally in our self-talk. "That thy trust may be in the LORD . . ." (verse 19).

   We cannot acquire trust in God without absolute confidence in His Word. If we follow these steps with the Word, trust in God will be established in our lives.

2. **Personal Experience—**Serving God will bring encounters with all types of experiences, and from these we will learn to trust in God. Trials, sickness, hurts, disappointments, etc., will not destroy us if we are determined to be saved, and they will develop in us a deep, abiding sense of confidence and trust.

   After nearly forty years of leading Israel, David, in reflecting upon his many battles, knew whom he could unquestionably trust. He had been betrayed by a son, trusted counselors, and friends, but he could say of God, "In him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence" (II Samuel 22:3).

   My personal experience of walking with Him for over thirty-five years has taught me that I can unreservedly trust God.

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3. **Instruction—**Arriving at the point of being able to trust God could be accomplished so much quicker if we would only learn from others. God has blessed most of us with parents, elders, ministers, and friends in our lives from whom we can learn valuable lessons of trust. Receiving instruction from others based on God's Word and their experiences can be a shortcut to our goal if we will only listen. Trust, in a great measure, can be learned through instruction (Ephesians 1:13).

Learning to trust God is one of the greatest truths we could ever learn. So many have been side-tracked into the destructive field of distrust; let us beware lest this tragedy befall us.

Distrust is one of the most miserable, defeating, debasing spirits we can allow to live in our mind and heart. Suspicion, fear, separation, seclusion, and cynicism are the lot of those who distrust. If events and circumstances in your life have given birth to distrust, by all means rise above them and walk again in the light and quietness of trust.

FAITH VERSUS TRUST

Faith is an essential element we must have in coming to God and in pleasing God (Hebrews 11:6). Faith is also a necessary ingredient and foundation upon which to build trust in God. It is possible to have faith in God while not trusting Him completely; however, it is impossible to trust God without first having faith in Him. Therefore, faith becomes a preliminary step in establishing trust in God.

Trust is a step beyond and a dimension deeper than faith. Many can believe who cannot trust; therefore, when their faith does not produce the desired results they despair. Trust stabilizes and secures us when we do not receive what we have asked and thought we had faith for. When combined, faith and trust are powerful allies; trust will sustain us *in* what faith does not deliver us *from*.

Trust holds faith in place. Doubt displaces faith, while trust resists and gives no place to doubt, thereby anchoring our faith in God. When our faith does not alter our circumstances, trust enables us to accept life as it is. Remember, faith is the catalyst that projects and propells us toward and into trust. When we return faith in God, it will mature into trust; trust then keeps us from becoming bitter when our requests are not granted.

Consider these contrasts in faith and trust:

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1. Faith—expects things.
   Trust—accepts things.

2. Faith—produces change.
   Trust—submits to unchanged conditions.

3. Faith—reaches.
   Trust—retains.

4. Faith—rushes.
   Trust—waits.

5. Faith—is believing.
   Trust—is knowing.

Trust is the ultimate relationship between humans and God; nothing supersedes it. Notice from the following examples how trust kept people when faith did not deliver them. Keep in mind that there was no flaw in their faith, but with their faith they had trust.

1. **Daniel**—He was a great man of faith, but it was trust in God that caused him to submit to being thrown to the lions (Daniel 6:1-24). In him we see what faith and trust combined can accomplish.

2. **James and Peter**—One was delivered, the other beheaded. Simon Peter's faith coupled with that of the church delivered him, but when James was beheaded he needed and had trust (Acts 12:1-19).

3. **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**—Faith caused them to declare that God was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace. Trust caused them to say, "But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:18).

4. **Paul**—Faith secured him in the experience of I Corinthians 11:24-28, while trust caused him to pen the words of II Timothy 4:7-8.

Trust never stands alone without faith, for faith is the essential cornerstone upon which it stands. We have presented nothing here with the idea of lessening the importance of faith. My objective is to challenge you to walk the high road of trust when you feel that your faith has not produced what you requested. When prayers are not answered as you wish, do not abandon your faith; just simply trust Him!

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INSTRUCTION TO THE TRUSTING

God's highest desire for us is that we trust Him. Knowing our ability to trust and the ingredients necessary for us to do so, God has given us some instructions relative to trust. Strangely enough, some things can elicit our trust while they are unworthy of it. God in His wisdom knows that certain things can and will deceive us and so warns us not to trust in them. Heeding His Word on these points is in our best interest.

1. We are not to trust in riches (Mark 10:24; I Timothy 6:17; Psalm 49:6-7).
2. We are not to trust in idols (Isaiah 42:17; Exodus 20:1-6; I John 5:21).
3. We are not to trust in ourselves (II Corinthians 1:8-9; Luke 18:9-14; Philippians 3:3).

Along with these pointed instructions, God warns us against becoming overconfident and trusting human devices and other deceitful things (Psalm 20:7; 44:4-8; 118:8-9; Isaiah 59:4).

Over and over again God admonishes us to trust in Him and His Word (Psalm 119:42; I Timothy 4:10; I Chronicles 5:20; Psalm 62:8). God and His Word are trustworthy, deserving our trust and confidence at all times, regardless of what befalls us.

REFLECTIONS

Miracles such as the one where loaves and fishes were multiplied bring out throngs of followers. Trust follows when there are no loaves and fishes, when the storms rage, and when it seems that all the world is against us. Trust is unaffected by circumstances; it is the highway upon which the confident tread.

Distrust is a wretched state in which to live in. Those who do so have little, if any, faith in anything or anyone, while spending their life in suspicion, fear, and anger. Certainly we must all learn that some people are not worthy of trust, but we should never allow isolated instances of hurt to drive us into the shell of distrust.

Trust is a powerful sedative for the soul, calming fears and easing tensions. It enables us to accept life, and walk confidently with God regardless of what happens. Trust is not tender or easily intimidated, and when perfected in us, nothing can daunt it. It is a heat shield against satanic attacks, releasing powerful faith. Never is it affected by the outcome.

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Trust is unaffected by environment. War/peace, poverty/prosperity, sickness/health, life/death—all of life's contrasts become fuel for trust. It requires no insight; it thrives in crisis, demands no signs, wonders, or miracles in order to operate. Trust is quiet, is youthful, seeks no changes in circumstance, abounds in shadows, reigns in darkness, needs no recognition, wears no crown, and seeks no throne. It is the silent, unseen fortress of the soul for those who possess it.

Trust has no restrictions, limitations or demands; is not predicated on results; lives without ifs, attachments, or amendments. Trust is worry's treatment, despair's cure, fear's remedy, anxiety's balm, and life's healer. Oh the truth of the old refrain, "'Tis So Sweet To Trust in Jesus!"

Job, the epitome of trust, gave his testimony of how he felt about God. May it be yours and mine.

> "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:
> but I will maintain mine own ways before
> him."
>
> (Job 13:15)

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 9

LEARNING TO TRUST GOD

1. Define the word *trust*. _____
2. Give one Hebrew word for trust. _____One Greek word. _____
3. How did Satan create distrust in Eve? _____.
4. List three things that will teach us to trust. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____.
5. Name four steppingstones to trust. (A)_____, (B)_____,
   (C)_____, (D)_____.
6. How can God's Word teach us to trust Him? _____
7. How long did David rule over Israel?_____
8. What was David's statement concerning his trust in the Lord? _____
   Scripture: _____
9. List three important people in our lives who can teach us to trust. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____.
10. Describe the benefits of learning trust through instruction. _____
    _____
11. Are faith and trust the same thing? _____Why? _____
12. Give three contrasts of faith versus trust. (A) _____,
    (B)_____, (C) _____.
13. When faith does not produce desired results, does it mean our faith is flawed? ___
14. When our prayers are not answered as we wish, what should we do?_____
15. Name three men from this lesson who had faith and trust in God. (A)_____,
    (B)_____, (C) _____.
16. Why are we not to trust in riches? _____
17. We should not trust in ourselves because _____
18. Our trust is to be in _____and His _____.
19. Write a paragraph on trust in your own words. _____
20. Write verbatim Job's testimony relative to trust. _____
    _____Scripture:_____

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LESSON 10

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THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART I

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER
I JOHN 4:7-21

The New Testament presents numerous topics relative to Christian conduct. Due to our sinful nature, some teachings are restrictive, while others are liberating compared to the discipline of the Mosaic law. Elements that we may perceive as restrictive or exercising control over us will, in the eventual analysis, prove to be liberating forces in our lives.

God's Word has clearly defined all points of importance relative to Christian conduct. Inventions and contrivances peculiar to each generation, while not named specifically or item by item are, nevertheless, dealt with by Scripture. Our challenge is to maintain a love for God and His Word to such an extent that we can recognize and separate ourselves from things that harm our relationship with God. Sensitivity to the Spirit and a strong discipline over our flesh, the world, and Satan are essential to our continued fellowship with God and His people. Nothing can separate us from the love of God so long as we maintain our devotion to Him. Anything that we allow to take precedence and prominence over Him and His Word will separate us from God.

God's requirements are not beyond us. We can keep them, and we must keep them if we are to please Him. Within ourselves, or if we depend on sheer human effort or desire, we fail. However, when we are born again of the water and Spirit, thus empowered by the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8), we can succeed. His expectations of us bring glory to His cause and fulfillment to our lives when we carry them out.

Although we will cover several topics in the following lessons, by no means will they present every detail of godly living. Nevertheless, they will discuss things we *ought* to do—the minimal requirements for all professing Christians. Failing to implement them in our lives will lead to failure and will be displeasing to God. Ignoring these as irrelevant does harm to the work of God and the body of Christ.

Allow these things to challenge you to the high plane of fellowship with God and others. Incorporate them into your daily life; you will be better for it, others will be blessed, and souls will be saved.

DEFINITIONS

Understanding the key word in these lessons is essential to our obeying these

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commands.

- **Ought**—comes from two Greek words, both of which apply to our study.
  1. *dei* (die) or *deon* (deh-on'), meaning it is necessary (as binding), behoved, must, needs, should.
  2. *opheileo* (of-i-leh'-o), meaning to owe, to be under obligation, be bound, indebted, must, should.
  3. Webster defines *ought* as an obligation or duty. Originally it was the past tense of the verb "to owe."

In view of these definitions, it becomes obvious that the things we are told that we "ought" to do in God's Word are actually commands to us. These are not optional entities to be chosen at will; they are divine requirements of every believer. If God expects and requires them, which He does, then He will enable and empower us to implement each of them in our daily Christian walk.

We need to apply these definitions to each of the seven lessons in this part of our study. Refer to them each time you begin a new topic.

Studying the topic of loving one another seems almost redundant, or at least unnecessary, since one would assume that Christians do love one another. Nevertheless, if maintaining the proper perspective or level of love that God wants us to have was not a problem, He would not have addressed it.

As sweet, natural, and inviting as it sounds, "loving" can be a problem area in our lives. It only becomes a problem for Christians when they fail to remain spiritual or obey God's Word.

Becoming a child of God is contingent upon our obedience to Acts 2:38 and John 3:1-8, which produces the experience received by the early church in Acts 2:1-4. Upon our receiving the Holy Ghost, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:5). One of the nine fruits of the Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22). God is love (I John 4:8); we as His children should certainly love one another.

John's letters rule out optional or selective love. He wrote to saints, not sinners, in his first epistle. I John 4 makes it clear that if we cannot love our brother, whom we have seen, then we cannot love God, whom we have not seen (I John 4:20).

Unquestionably we are obligated, or indebted, to love one another. Our charity should be far reaching when we walk after the Spirit and Word. Loving the lost as well as the saved should be the ongoing experience of every Christian.

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Love is not a weak, unguided, undisciplined affection that gives us license to do as we please. Rather it is true biblical charity with all its attendant characteristics. For example, chastisement is an expression of love, whether exercised by man or God (Hebrews 12:6-11). Love has many disciplines and corrections as well as liberties. Love can and often does involve rebuke (Revelation 3:19). Love is such a powerful force that it can motivate us to exercise discipline or tenderness—as each case requires.

As Christians we are under a scriptural injunction to love. Scripture covers five specific areas concerning whom we are to love. Although our love is to be all encompassing (reaching as far as needed), it must also be regulated. We are not to love some things, for example, "the world" (I John 2:5-16).

Focusing our love upon the five following things is essential to our Christian character and conduct:

A. **CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE GOD**

Jesus stated the extent to which we are to love God: with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). Certainly a Christian loves God! However we must realize that Satan constantly seeks to diminish this affection and separate us from the love we have for God.

We express our love for God not in words alone, but also in our keeping the commandments of God (John 14:15, 23). Our love for God and God's love for us is one of the great themes of the Bible. I encourage you to study it in depth.

Iniquity abounds only when our love waxes cold (Matthew 24:12). Loving God keeps iniquity in check and makes keeping His commands easy; it is the first and great commandment (Matthew 22:38)! When we truly love God, loving others comes easy.

B. **CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER**

Discipleship and its exhibition to the world about us are manifested by our love one to another (John 13:34-35).

Jesus Christ explicitly commanded us ("ought") to love one another; in fact, He called this a "new commandment" (John 13:34; 15:17).

Loving our brother or one another is an important topic of the Scripture. John indicated that the children of God and the children of Satan are manifested in the areas of righteousness and love (I John 2:10-18). Cain is an example of

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what hatred can do even between brethren. Never should such an attitude or environment exist among brethren. Hating our brother or sister makes us a murderer in the eyes of God (I John 3:15).

True Christian charity is expressed not only in word but in deed as well. Study John's directive relative to this statement (I John 3:17-18). (See also James 2:14-18.)

So vast is this area of study that you should do an in-depth study of it.

C. **CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE THEIR ENEMIES**

Loving one another can be a problem area for Christians, so we can easily deduce that loving our enemies requires additional effort. Again, the secret to carrying out this scriptural injunction is simply to love God.

Jesus reversed the ideology and theology of His listeners when He contrasted what they had heard with what He now commanded them (Matthew 5:43-48). They were taught to love their neighbor and hate their enemy. Jesus not only wants us to love our neighbor but our enemy as well.

Christians should sincerely strive to make friends of their enemies, but when this is impossible, the minimal requirement for us is to love them.

D. **CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE THEIR FAMILY**

Familial love in a home of professing saints is necessary. Husbands are explicitly commanded to love their wives and not to be bitter against them (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 33; Colossians 3:19). Elderly women are to teach younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:1-4).

The statement "Christians are to love their family" strikes a strange note, in that it seems superfluous. However, with so many dysfunctional families existing and the breakdown of so many marriages, along with quarreling and bickering prevalent in so many homes, this statement is needed and should be practiced. Satan is attacking the homes of Christians everywhere. Be advised, the family is under siege by hell itself through many subtle avenues. Believers should be on guard lest natural, God-given affection for their family grows cold or cease.

I call on you to revive and renew your love for the family that God has given you. Let us declare war on Hollywood's insidious influence that seeks to break down family values and traditions. Remove from your life: movies, films,

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magazines, and books that weaken family ties. Return to old-fashioned principles of truth and holiness along with principles that strengthen our homes and love for the family.

E. **CHRISTIANS ARE TO LOVE THEIR LEADERS**

Paul instructed us to know those who labor among us, are over us, and admonish us. We are also to regard and esteem them very highly in love for the work they perform (I Thessalonians 5:12-13). God has established order in His kingdom and set leaders in authority over us. This within itself is for our safety, well-being, and protection regardless of what level it may occur. As saints, our responsibility and privilege is to love these people with a deep, godly love.

Though some have failed while serving in leadership capacities, on the whole men of God are true servants of God. In our age when leaders of every level are under attack, as Christians let us show the proper biblical principle by loving those over us.

REFLECTIONS

Love is a multifaceted subject touching all our lives in some measure. When love is absent we are all the poorer for it; when it is present, both the loved and those who love are richer. Love is costly, but hate exacts a far greater toll. You have the capacity to love as a person; as a Christian that ability expands to incomprehensible heights. Love confirms your Christianity, while the absence of it removes the designation from your name. Allow Him who is love to love through you; become an open channel for God's love to flow through. I Corinthians 13:1-13 is God's manual on love; study and implement it in your life.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON #10

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

1. *Ought* comes from two Greek words, what are they? (A)_____, (B)_____.
2. Give Webster's definition of *ought*._____
3. Upon our receiving the Holy Ghost, the love of God is shed abroad in our _____.
4. Name one of the things we are not to love _____.
5. The five specific areas in which we are to love are: (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____, (E) _____.
6. We are to love God with all our: (A)_____, (B) _____, (C) _____, (D) _____.
7. We express our love for God by keeping His _____.
8. _____abounds when our love waxes cold.
9. Jesus called loving one another a _____commandment.
10. What Old Testament man is an example of what hatred can do between brethren? _____
11. Those in Jesus' day had been taught to _____ their enemy and _____their neighbor.
12. Jesus taught that we are to love our _____as well as our neighbor.
13. Husbands are to love their wives and not be _____against them.
14. _____women are to teach younger women to _____their husbands.
15. Christians should be on guard lest natural, God-given _____ for their family grows cold.
16. From this lesson name three of the four things that could weaken our homes and that Christians should remove from their lives. (A)_____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
17. We are to know those who _____among us and are _____us and _____us.
18. Those over us are to be _____very highly in love for their work.

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19. God has set leaders in authority over us; this is for our _____, and protection.
20. Read I Corinthians 13 in its entirety. Did you do this? Yes_____ No_____.

LESSON 11

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THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART II

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO GIVE MORE EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS THEY HAVE HEARD

HEBREWS 2:1-4

Before going too far in this or any of these studies, always refer to the definition of the word "ought" in Lesson 10. Allow these necessary obligations or responsibilities of believers to be indelibly stamped in your mind.

The Epistle to the Hebrews exalts Christ to His rightful place of God manifest in the flesh. In the first two chapters of Hebrews, Christ and angels are the primary subjects. While we study these chapters, we will see several pertinent truths relative to both. In this context, the book sounds a warning to the Hebrew Christians, as well as all Christendom, concerning the things they have heard.

Hebrew believers in the first century were strong believers in angels due to the angelic activity in the Old Testament. Paul himself was convinced of the existence and ministry of angels, since they had played a vital role in his life since conversion. (See Lesson 27 in Volume I.) However, it was important for believers to understand the superiority of Christ over angels, both in His Sonship and in His deity.

Apparently some Hebrew believers had a misconception regarding Christ. Therefore the Book of Hebrews establishes Christ's preeminence, while at the same time giving proper recognition to the past, present, and future work of angels. Inserted in this discourse is the warning contained in our text for this lesson. This admonition remains relevant to all believers of every generation lest they become careless, thereby allowing life-giving truths to slip away from them.

Hebrews 2 appeals to us on the basis of "so great salvation," referring to its origin as well as its Originator. Neglecting this salvation, which involves allowing taught truths to slip from us, will put us in an inescapable position. Giving proper and necessary heed to salvational truths is essential if we are to escape eternal damnation.

A. **ORIGIN OF THIS GREAT SALVATION**

The text sets forth the origin of this great salvation along with God's method for its preservation and propagation. It reinforces our need to give heed to it by

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contrasting its author (Christ) and His ministry to that of angels.

1. Word Spoken by Angels

   Undoubtedly this phrase refers to the ministry of angels during Old Testament times, specifically during the law. The law was ordained by angels (Galatians 3:19) or given by the disposition of angels to Moses (Acts 7:38, 53). Anytime God sent an angel with His word, or on a mission, every transgression and disobedience received a just reward (Hebrews 2:2). God often used angels as His messengers to announce blessings as well as judgment; their words always came to pass (Genesis 19:1-26; Judges 13:2-25).

2. Word Spoken by the Lord

   God has spoken to humans in many ways in the past, but in these last days He has spoken by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16), the express image of God's person (Hebrews 1:3), and the Word made flesh (John 1:1-14). He is superior to angels. Since He is superior, if what angels spoke was steadfast, how much more should we give heed to what Christ spoke?

   New Testament salvation from sin is not a philosophy of modern people or a product of history; it was begun by Jesus Christ. It was the Lord who taught that being born again was a necessity (John 3:1-8). He taught water baptism and Spirit baptism while on earth (Matthew 28:19-20; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 1:1-8). He gave commandments to His apostles to be carried out after His ascension (Acts 1:1-3; Luke 24:46-49; Matthew 28:19-20). After His ascension He sent back the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, just as He promised (Acts 2:1-4, 38; 10:44-48).

   Neglecting this salvation and Christ's teachings will put us in an inescapable position. We must never allow this saving doctrine to slip from our life and our church.

3. Word Spoken by Apostles

   Salvational truths first taught by Christ were confirmed, taught, established, and made sure by those who heard Him. God bore witness to this confirmation and continuation of the salvation message with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

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Peter, who had the keys to the kingdom of heaven, used them in Acts 2. His baptismal formula in Acts 2:38 does not contradict Christ's in Matthew 28:19; it is a fulfillment and explanation of Christ's baptismal formula.

New Testament writers have preserved with precision Christ's teaching, thus confirming the salvation message began by the Lord. Paul, who received it by revelation, wrote of and propagated identical truths (Galatians 1:6-12).

Though viciously attacked, especially during the Dark Ages, God's Word has been preserved and handed down to us. Neglecting this salvation or simply letting it slip away from us has eternal consequence.

B. **THOSE WHO HAVE TAUGHT US**

Not being privileged to sit at the feet of Jesus or His apostles does not in any way negate our responsibility to truth. Though we are many centuries removed from the date of its origin, this great salvation and how to obtain it have been preserved for us. When the Bible refers to "the things which we have heard" (Hebrews 2:1), it does not imply that we had to hear them from Christ, an angel, or the apostles in order to give heed to them. So long as we have the truth as set forth in the Scripture, we are responsible to hold it in esteem, guarding it lest we let it slip.

In order to clarify our text's warning to us, and since it is an obligation of believers, let us define the key words in our text.

- **More**—comes from the root Greek word *perrissos* (per-is-sot-er'-oce), meaning superabundantly, more abundant, more frequent, much more, the rather, more earnest, or more exceedingly.
  Webster defines this word as "1. serious and intense, not joking or playful; zealous and sincere; deeply convinced. 2. intent, fixed. 3. serious, important; not trivial."

- **Heed**—comes from the Greek word *prosech* (pros-ekh'-o), meaning to hold the mind towards, pay attention, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to.
  Webster defines the word as "to mind, to regard with care, to pay close attention to."

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- **Slip**—is from the Greek word *pararrhueo* (par-ar-hroo-eh'-o), meaning to flow by, carelessly pass or miss.

  Webster offers several definitions, among which are: "1. To go quietly or secretly, to move without attracting notice. 2. To go, move, or pass smoothly, quickly, or easily. 3. To escape or pass from a person's memory, mind, power, or grasp."

From this it becomes evident that believers must exercise caution relative to truth. Not only must we guard the plan of salvation, the gospel, doctrine, etc., but we must take heed to the teachings of God's Word that tell us how to live and remain saved.

God has provided a wonderful system of checks and balances in our lives. Where one may fail or come short, others are provided for our safety and protection. We have numerous avenues through which we can hear from God and receive truth. Although the heavens declare the glory of God and the universe teaches us of Him, God always has a back-up system should one fail or should we overlook one (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 10:18-21). Should error be injected by something or someone (even an angel, Galatians 1:6-9), God has other sources through which correction and balance will come. Thus we are protected when we give the more earnest heed to what we have heard. This also renders us inexcusable before God since He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:1-4). Let us note the means and methods through which God speaks and we hear. This is His system of checks and balances.

1. Parents

   While your parents may not have known or taught you the truth of salvation, in most cases they instilled many valuable principles into your life. Old-fashioned teaching and examples of morals, honesty, truthfulness, virtue, honor, etc., are valuable to your life. Never let them slip.

2. Teachers

   If we have been privileged to go to Sunday school or church, we have heard basic, simple truths of how to live. Even our schoolteachers and professors have imparted good things to us that we need to retain. Of course, not all facets of our education may have been Bible based. Those that were biblical, retain; what was unbiblical, dismiss! As Paul said, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

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3. Pastors

   Along with your pastor, God has given us other ministers to preach and teach truth to us (Ephesians 4:11-14). Every sermon you hear should be examined in the light of Scripture, not for the sake of argument or disrespect but for clarity and harmony.

4. God's Word

   Though others preach and teach God's Word to us, we have a responsibility to study, learn, and understand it for ourselves. It is the final authority on any subject. By it we judge all things, from it we learn how to live, and it will be the measure by which we are judged in the end.

5. God's Spirit

   The Holy Ghost is a teacher, guide, reminder, and reprover (John 14:26; 16:7-13; I John 2:27; I Thessalonians 4:9). God's grace that saves us teaches us how we should live in this world (Titus 2:11-13). God can and does speak to us in unmistakably clear tones. We must never let slip what we have heard from Him.

As never before, we are inundated with voices and examples from so-called Christians to reexamine, review, and reevaluate our beliefs, standards, and convictions. In this day of value adaptation and situation ethics, I appeal to you to give earnest heed to what you have been taught.

Modest dress codes, principles of decency, honesty, holiness, separation, etc., are being attacked by liberal philosophers as legalism, pharisaism, and asceticism. Influenced by the decadent lifestyle of our society and the permissiveness of the times, false prophets of modernism are calling for an abandonment of what we have heard. These proponents of a glorious freedom allegedly seek to deliver ignorant, dated, old-fashioned saints from a bondage imposed upon them by a previous generation of preachers, parents, and statesmen who were ignorant and out of touch. Such so-called scholars are products of a generation of luxury and ease. They think that they are the anointed, sent to widen the straight gate and broaden the narrow way.

Our teachers, those from whom we have heard, are not ignorant, aberrant, outdated evangels of a distant yesteryear. Truth is relevant to all generations! Holiness is God's standard! Let us return to the faith once delivered to the saints. Let us deny self, crucify

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the flesh, and perfect holiness in the sight of God. Let us give earnest heed to what we have heard. This we ought to do.

C. **HOW CAN WE LET THEM SLIP**

Untold enemies and innumerable foes attack sound principles of truth. Never have so many stood for so little and so many abandoned so much. None have escaped the relentless onslaught of hell against God's church. Since we are subjected to the pressures of peers, false teachers, and strong voices, it is incumbent upon us to give earnest heed to truth lest we let it slip.

Here are three safety nets, checks and balances, or guards that we can raise against our insidious foe, who wants to *slip* from us what we have heard. Slipping occurs so silently, imperceptibly, and easily that we can lose precious things painlessly and effortlessly. Let us mount a guard against the enemy; let us set a watchman on the wall as we hone our perceptivity to hear from God. Add other thoughts to these as you study or teach these principles of safety.

1. Reviewing, restating, rehearsing, and repeating over and over again principles of truth will keep them fresh in our minds and hearts. Satan is a thief of the Word (Matthew 13:19), and through our negligence he can cause us to let truth slip away. Repetition is one of the most effective ways to establish practiced principles. Parents and preachers, let us not grow weary in rehearsing the blessed story over and over again.

2. Being preoccupied with truth and eternal values rather than *things* of lesser value will thwart Satan's attempt to slip truth from us. Our life does not consist in the abundance of things that we possess (Luke 12:15). Therefore, let us seek things that are above, setting our affection upon them (Colossians 3:1-2).

3. Actively pursuing, promulgating, and practicing righteousness and true holiness will keep us focused on principles of truth. Not for one moment can we slacken or let down our guard in our vigilance for retaining truth.

REFLECTIONS

Often we do not even miss the things that exit quietly from our lives. Subtly other things, often in the form of pleasure, slip in to occupy the time we once gave to God. While

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being spiritually poor, blind, wretched, miserable, and naked, we appease our conscience with accomplishments in the carnal realm. Gone is the fulfillment, integrity, and communion with God, replaced by a vain, empty shallowness that does not satisfy. We justify our condition on the grounds of enlightenment and "everybody else is doing it, so it must be okay."

Standing outside a heart emptied by negligence, Christ stands knocking and seeking reentry for a renewal of communion (Revelation 3:14-22). Do we have the fortitude to turn around? Do we have courage to open the door? If so, we can regain what has slipped away. Returning to us will be what we have missed so much, what we were taught, what we once believed and lived, what we once would have gladly died for.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 11

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO GIVE MORE EARNEST HEED TO THE THINGS THEY HAVE HEARD

1. The law was given to Moses by the disposition of _____.
2. God has spoken to us in these last days by His _____.
3. This salvation, which at the first was spoken by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who _____Him.
4. *More* comes from a Greek word meaning _____.
5. *Heed* comes from a Greek word meaning _____.
6. *Slip* comes from a Greek word meaning _____.
7. God has given us all things that pertain to _____ and_____.
8. List the five methods through which we can be instructed. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____, (E) _____.
9. Whether saved or lost, our parents in most cases instilled many valuable_____ in our lives.
10. Name two of the three groups of teachers who have imparted good things to us. (A) _____, (B) _____.
11. Paul told us to _____all things and hold fast to that which is _____.
12. From Ephesians 4:11-14, list three of the five ministries mentioned: (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
13. God's Word is the final _____ on any subject.
14. By His Word we are to _____all things.
15. The Holy Ghost is the final_____on any subject.
16. God's _____both saves and teaches us. Give Scripture reference. _____.
17. Truth is relevant to all generations. T _____F_____.
18. _____is one of the most effective ways to establish practiced principles.
19. Life does not consist in the abundance of things that we _____. Scripture reference: _____.

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20. Pursuing and practicing holiness will keep us _____ on principles of _____.

LESSON 12

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THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART III

CHRISTIANS OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY
LUKE 18:1-14

Jesus taught two parables in our Scripture text taken from Luke's Gospel. One was directed to those who trusted in themselves as being righteous and despised others. To these He gave the example of the Pharisee and tax collector offering prayers and how the despised tax collector was justified before God rather than the self-righteous Pharisee.

Our subject comes from Jesus' parable to those who may grow weary and become negligent in their prayer life even to the point of fainting. Persevering, or continuing in prayer, regardless of circumstances, is the underlying message in the parable of the unjust judge.

Jesus Christ is not an unjust judge, Lord, or Master; none could be counted more just or fair than He. Therefore, if a poor widow's perseverance touched an unjust judge's heart, how much more can our needs touch the heart of Jesus when we present them to Him in prayer!

Going back to the definition of the word *ought* at the beginning of this series affords us insight into the importance of prayer in one's life. *Ought*, in this lesson, means we are under obligation, we are bound, and it is necessary for us to pray always. Too often we offer prayers to God without persevering in prayer until they are answered.

Since prayer is one of the great themes of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, it will be impossible to cover every aspect of it here. Consequently, we will confine this lesson primarily to the necessity of prayer in a Christian's life. Refer to lessons elsewhere in this book and in Volume I on the subject of prayer.

A. CHRISTIANS ARE COMMANDED TO PRAY

Here are scriptural directives relative to the prayer life of the saint. Since God's Word instructs us to pray, we are assured that God is looking out for our spiritual welfare by so instructing us.

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1. "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8).
2. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).
3. "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12).
4. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (I Peter 4:7).
5. "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).
6. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).
7. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds" (Colossians 4:2-3).
8. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 1:20).
9. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36).
10. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38).

In view of these and other verses of Scripture, none of us can justify a prayerless life. We are blessed, along with many other benefits, when we maintain a consistent prayer life.

B. CHRISTIANS ARE TO PERSEVERE IN PRAYER

The Word of God explicitly teaches importunity, or perseverance, in prayer. As Christians, we often wonder why God does not answer us as we want and when we want in every matter. Through experience, as well as from Scripture, I have learned the blessing of some prayers being unanswered. I have also learned the value and reason for God telling us to persevere in our prayers. We must bring some matters to God again and again, not because He does not hear or care, but because He wants to change us. This is His plan, and I can attest that it works well.

Study these examples of perseverance and gauge your prayers accordingly. Above all, never grow weary or faint in praying.

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1. Daniel's prayer lasted twenty-one days (Daniel 10:1-21).
2. Elijah prayed seven times in succession for rain (I Kings 18:41-46).
3. This lesson is taught in the example of the three loaves (Luke 11:1-13).
4. Jesus' parable of the unjust judge illustrates the point (Luke 18:1-8).
5. A Syro-Phoenician woman obtained healing for her daughter through importunity (Mark 7:24-30).
6. Cornelius found salvation through relentless prayer (Acts 10:1-48).
7. Simon Peter was delivered from prison because the church prevailed through perseverance (Acts 12:1-19).

Such examples from Scripture, testimonies from others, and personal experience should establish in our minds the importance of unrelenting prayer.

C. **WHY CHRISTIANS MUST PRAY**

Prayer is a necessity, not an option, for all Bible-believing Christians. Not only is it a privilege, it is a duty! So when we pray, not only are we blessed, we are fulfilling a duty to God.

Perhaps if we understood *why* it is necessary for us to pray, we would be more inclined to fulfill this Christian responsibility. Somehow, we need to understand the two-fold scriptural concept of prayer: it is both a *blessing* and a *necessity*. We *ought* to pray! Study these reasons why we must pray; add others to the list since this is almost an inexhaustible subject.

1. In Order to Keep from Fainting

   Fainting here is not a physical problem of a temporary loss of consciousness as a result of an inadequate flow of blood to the brain. Fainting is a spiritual condition posing a constant danger to all saints unless they pray.

   Note the following New Testament Greek words from which our English word *faint* is taken.

   A. *Ekkaio*—(ek-kak-eh'-o): to be weak, to fail in heart, to be weary.
   B. *Eklui*—(ek-loo'-o): to relax.
   C. *Kamno*—(kam'-no): to toil, to tire, to sicken, to be wearied.

   Laxity in prayer is one of the chief causes of the spiritual malady called fainting. For a Christian to faint and remain in such a state would eventually cause him to be lost.

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Weariness among both ministers and saints is prevalent in our society. Pressures never before experienced by God's people are brought to bear against us today. Temptation, trials, financial pressure, domestic strife, child-rearing problems, job difficulties, and satanic oppression, along with innumerable unmentioned things, are enough to make the strongest weary. As strange as it sounds, we can even become weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9).

Prayer is one of the most rejuvenating, reviving, restful experiences a saint can engage in. Not so much for the body, because prayer is work, but for the mind, soul, spirit, and heart of a person.

Prayer is a necessity if we are to prevent fainting. We should also exercise caution lest we faint (slacken, sicken, or be weary) in prayer itself. Should we slacken in prayer, spiritual fainting could in no way be averted.

Study these Scripture references relative to the subject of fainting: Revelation 2:3; Hebrews 12:3; Proverbs 24:10; II Corinthians 4:1, 16; Galatians 6:9.

2. In Order to Overcome Satan

Satan not only attacks us, but he also attacks our prayers in order to hinder them. Daniel is a prime example of how Satan hinders prayer, but perseverance in prayer itself overcomes the hindrance of Satan (Daniel 10:1-21).

Our prayers not only bring personal victory over Satan; they can spare others for whom we pray from destruction. No doubt Jesus' prayer for Peter is what saved him from Satan's sifting (Luke 22:31-32). (See also II Corinthians 13:7.)

We should pray that we will not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13; Luke 22:40) but delivered from evil. Prayer provides the spiritual energy that saints need to overcome satanic oppression, opposition, temptation, fear, or any other force that the devil brings against us.

3. In Order to See Souls Saved

One of the few prayer requests Jesus made was for us to pray that He would send laborers into the harvest (Matthew 9:38). Paul asked the Thessalonian church to pray that God's Word would have free course

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among others as it did among them (II Thessalonians 3:1-2). Why? In order that nothing would hinder the Word, so others could be saved. It took a prayer meeting for Peter to be persuaded to go to a lost Gentile. It took a prayer meeting for the lost Gentile to find the way to be saved (Acts 10:1-48).

Intercessory prayer—going to God in behalf of others—is one of the greatest needs among us today. Prayer brings people to God and God to people as in the case of Ananias and Saul (Acts 9:1-20).

Great revivals are born of prayer. When we pray individually and collectively, souls will be saved from the bondage of sin.

4. In Order to Maintain a Forgiving and Repentant Spirit

Obtaining forgiveness when we fail, after we are saved, is directly connected to our willingness to forgive others. We must at all times maintain both a forgiving and repentant spirit (Matthew 6:14-15; 18:23-35).

Brothers or sisters who commit trespasses should repent, and when they do so, we should quickly forgive them (Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 5:23-24). Even when others who have wronged us do not ask our forgiveness, we should forgive them anyway.

Prayer keeps this type of spirit alive in the life of a saint. Through prayer we are empowered to repent and forgive. Even while prayer is in progress, we are to forgive anything we have against others (Mark 11:24-26). Only through the power of prayer can this essential work be wrought in the life of a believer.

5. In Order to Be Spiritually Minded

Walking after the Spirit, or minding the things of the Spirit, is God's requirement of believers. However, we are inundated by things that create carnal-mindedness in us. Prayer is the deciding factor between being carnally minded versus being spiritually minded. Carnal-mindedness produces death (spiritual), while spiritual-mindedness produces both life and peace (Romans 8:4-9).

A saint's greatest battle is that of the mind. Although he is unable to control it, Satan does have access to our minds along with the ability to speak our language. He injects into our thought system all sorts of devious, evil, immoral, hateful thoughts and imaginations. We can only

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conquer these strongholds through mighty, spiritual weapons. Prayer is one of the key weapons in pulling down the strongholds of: (1) imagination, (2) every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, (3) thoughts not in obedience to Christ (II Corinthians 10:3-6).

Carnality is the result of prayerlessness; spirituality is the result of prayerfulness. Prayer can bridge the gap between carnality and spirituality; therefore, Christians ought to pray.

6. In Order to Overcome the Flesh

Flesh here is not the skin, muscle, sinew, etc., that covers our bones. It is not the visible part of us known as our body. Flesh, in this context, is the old man, the body of sin (Romans 6:6). It is being in the flesh (Romans 8:8) and the body of this death (Romans 7:24). *Flesh* is a scriptural term referring to our fallen Adamic nature with its inherent desires, lusts, and evil intent uncontrolled by the Spirit of God.

To know what the flesh likes and will engage itself in when undisciplined, study Paul's teaching in Galatians 5:19-21. Although Christians have been delivered from these things and empowered by the Spirit, a constant struggle goes on between flesh and Spirit for domination of our lives (Galatians 5:16-18; Romans 8:4-10).

Prayer is the catalyst that breaks down, conquerors, and gives victory over the flesh. Only the Spirit, mobilized through prayer, is stronger than the flesh.

7. In Order to Face God

We accomplish two achievements through the singular exercise of prayer: we escape the things coming upon the earth, and we will be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man. Accompanying these achievements and preceding them, a saint will be able to keep his heart from being overcharged with: (1) surfeiting (dissipation), (2) drunkenness, (3) cares of this life (Luke 21:34-36). Keeping our hearts right must and will precede our being caught away and standing before Christ to hear Him say, "Well done." What an accomplishment! All because we choose to pray.

Facing God will be the fate of every individual. Facing Him and being accounted worthy of eternal life are two different things. All saints must

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appear before the *judgment seat* of Christ to receive a reward for their works (Romans 14:10-12; I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10). Sinners will stand in the *white throne of judgment* at the end of the Millennium, at the second resurrection (Revelation 20:11-15). There they will be judged according to their deeds.

REFLECTIONS

Living, working, and even dying for the Lord are important factors in God's overall plan of salvation. Undergirding, supporting, and providing power for all of this is prayer. In view of this, not only is prayer necessary, but it provides eternal benefits beyond description.

Prayer is the saint's highest privilege. Being able to use the name of Jesus Christ in prayer affords us the rewards of all the things discussed in this lesson plus many, many more. Actively engage yourself in an unceasing prayer life. Learn how to pray and be sensitive to know when to pray. We can build ourselves up on our most holy faith through the power of prayer (Jude 20).

Study the subject of prayer until it is deeply ingrained in your mind and heart. Then practice the principle of prayer on an ongoing basis. Remember, Christians ought to pray!

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 12

CHRISTIANS OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY

1. In the parable of the praying Pharisee and publican, which one was justified?____ _____
2. The widow in this lesson presented her case to what kind of judge? (underline one) A. Kind B. Just C. Honorable D. Unjust E. Righteous F. Unrighteous.
3. Give three Scripture references which teach Christians that they should pray. (A) _____, (B) _____, (C)_____
4. We are to pray for the Lord to send (who)_____into His (what) _____. Scripture reference:_____.
5. Give three Scripture references relative to importunity in prayer. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
6. Elijah prayed how many times before rain came? (Underline one) A. Nine B. Three C. Ten D. Seven E. Twelve F. One
7. Daniel prayed for _____days before an answer came.
8. Christians must pray for the following seven reasons. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____, (E) _____, (F)_____, (G) _____.
9. Give one Greek word that the word *faint* translates. _____.
10. Paul told us in Galatians 6:9 to not be _____ in well _____.
11. _____is a necessity if we are to prevent fainting.
12. Jesus' prayer for Peter saved him from Satan's _____.
13. We should pray that we will not be led into _____.
14. Paul asked the Thessalonian church to pray that God's Word would have _____ _____course.
15. Intercessory prayer is _____.
16. Obtaining forgiveness for ourselves is connected to our willingness to _____ _____others.

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17. _____-mindedness produces death,_____-mindedness produces life.
18. The word *flesh* in the context of this lesson is the _____man, the body of _____.
19. Give two achievements that we can be accomplish through prayer. (A)_____, (B)_____.
20. Saints will appear before the _____of Christ, while sinners will be judged at the _____of judgment.

LESSON 13

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THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART IV

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO PAY TITHES
MATTHEW 23:23

Jesus, in this text, addressed the scribes and Pharisees, whom He scathingly rebuked for being hypocrites. God seems to be extremely intolerant of hypocrisy, lukewarmness, or, as we often term it, "straddling the fence." He would rather that we be cold, which is indicative of an unquestionably lost position, than be halfhearted or lukewarm (Revelation 3:15-16). Hypocrisy seems to draw God's harshest condemnation, more so than any other spiritual condition. This was the condition of those whom He addressed in Matthew 23. Certainly none of us want to fall into this reprehensible, disgraceful spiritual condition.

Christ's condemnation of those in Matthew 23:23 dealt with what they had omitted rather than what they had done. Their tithe paying was not the object of Jesus' rebuke; it was their neglect of weightier matters of the law, namely judgment, mercy, and faith.

He did denounce their practice of giving to be seen of people (Matthew 6:1-4; 23:5). Christ further disapproved of boasting about monetary contributions (Luke 18:10-14). Amounts are insignificant where size and value are concerned (Mark 12:41-44). Sacrifice and the attitude in which one gives are paramount in Christ's eyes. His system of measurement is far different from ours. We count what is given; He apparently counts what one has left.

Gifts, offerings, and alms, which are contributions over and above our tithes, are to be given according to scriptural guidelines (Romans 12:8; II Corinthians 9:6-7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). God's Word abounds with instances and illustrations connected to money, offerings, and sacrifice. From the first sacrifice that Cain and Abel offered until the close of Scripture, we find many great lessons on the subject.

God's Word sets forth a far different concept regarding money as it relates to His kingdom from the concepts of our carnal minds. Corporate America with its monetary system cannot become the rule and measure by which churches are run. Carnal people want to structure and pattern the church's financial system like that of the world, often ignoring and contradicting Scripture. I firmly believe in following good bookkeeping practices using acceptable accounting procedure and handling church finances in a professional, businesslike manner. Checks and balances need to be in place, governmental rules and laws obeyed, and Internal Revenue Service codes followed, along with all

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other principles of honesty. Should any government ever inflict upon us something that conflicts with the Bible, however, we should follow God's law first and foremost.

But, I am not for structuring the church and God's work after some carnal, stingy, uncompassionate miser's concept. Such people have no love for the lost. They do not see the need for building and maintaining church buildings, supporting worthy, godly causes, or properly supporting the ministry. Their greed, hidden under a pseudo concern and spirituality, seeks nothing less than control of God's man and God's money. They are not interested in others; they are interested in amassing large bank accounts while God's work languishes and the lost perish. Such a stand is condemned, just as Ananias and Sapphira were when they manifested the same spirit.

Dishonest, greedy people who have used religion as a get-rich scheme, have through the centuries done harm to the work of God. This alone should not deter us in our effort to please God in the area of tithes and offerings. By and large, pastors, other ministers, and churches are sincere, honest people seeking to do God's work in God's way.

After years of personal involvement, along with much soul searching and study of God's Word, I simply cannot find any way to carry out God's work separate and apart from money. God's Word warns us that the love of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10), that we cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24), and that riches carry inherent dangers with them (Mark 10:23-24; I Timothy 6:9; Luke 12:13-21). It warns us against being greedy or seeking ill-gotten gains (I Timothy 3:3, 8; I Peter 5:2). It especially warns ministers of these dangers.

In spite of money's innate dangers, God has chosen to use it and other media of exchange as a part of His work. He has made money a necessary part of our daily lives, and by the proper use of it, He allows us to lay up treasure in heaven (Mark 10:17-22). We may also use other means to accomplish this.

Since money is an integral part of our lives, we become stewards in God's eyes with an accountability to Him of how we handle our resources. Consequently, He places us on our honor relative to tithes and offerings. God does not force us to set anything aside for Him, but failing to do so does incur His displeasure and wrath.

God's Word teaches Christians to pay tithes. We ought not to leave off other things such as judgment, mercy, and faith. Neither should we leave the other (tithe paying) undone (Matthew 23:23).

Note: Lesson 15 of Volume I in this series covers the subject of tithing in depth. In order to not be repetitive, I will condense this lesson somewhat. I include it, however, since it is among the things we as Christians ought to do.

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Review the definition of the word *ought*, which means, among other things, an obligation or necessity. Tithing fits in this catalog of things we, as Christians, ought to do. Before viewing any of them as laborious or demanding, let us consider them as acts of obedience to carry out with joy in service to the King. Let us consider the rewards we will reap here and later; this makes the performance of them easier and worthwhile.

A. HISTORY OF TITHES

Historically, from the Scripture, tithing originated well over two thousand years before Christ. Since that time it has been an integral part of worship and giving to God. Our need to sacrifice to God spans time from the dawn of civilization until now. Cain and Abel provide examples of both how and how not to offer gifts to God.

Tithing, or ten percent of our increase, began with a man (Abraham) whose highest priority was to please God. From his example and obedience to God's will, faithful followers of the Lord have made tithes and offerings a part of their lives ever since. Let us trace the origin and historical aspect of this important Bible doctrine.

1. Tithing was practiced at least 430 years before the law of Moses (Galatians 3:16-19; Genesis 14:20).

    a. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek; this is the first mention of tithing (Genesis 14:17-24; Hebrews 7:1-11).

    b. Jacob promised God one-tenth, or a tithe, of all that God blessed him with (Genesis 28:16-22).

2. Under the law that God gave to Moses for Israel, tithing became an integral part of God's requirements and commandments. It established tithes of many things for various uses. These make an interesting study; a few of them are mentioned here.

    a. God commanded Israel to pay tithes (Leviticus 27:26-34; Malachi 3:8-12). They were to tithe on any increase in seed, fruit, or herds.

    b. Levi, or the priesthood, received, "all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance" (Numbers 18:21). Although tithing was the Lord's and was holy unto Him (Leviticus 27:30-32), it was to be given to the Levites (Numbers 18:20-32; Nehemiah 10:37-39).

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c. Levites were to pay tithes on the tithes they received; it appears that this amount went to Aaron or the one serving as high priest (Numbers 18:25-32). Or else it was to go to the house of God according to Nehemiah 10:38-39; 12:44. No conflict appears here, since the priests served the house of God. The same principle is set forth in Malachi 3:10. The people simply brought their tithes to the house of God there to be received by those who were over them.

d. Every third year a special tithe, over and above the regular annual tithe was required of Israel (Deuteronomy 14:28-29; 26:12-14).

e. Scripture present numerous events relative to tithing under the law; these provide an interesting study (Deuteronomy 12:5-14; II Chronicles 31:5-21). Correlate these with other passages of Scripture in this lesson.

3. Tithing as a practice for God's people continued into and during the New Testament era. Not once does the New Testament condemn the practice of tithing; rather it is supported, taught, and required of Christians.

B. **EXAMPLES OF TITHING**

God's Word furnishes several examples of those who tithed. Study these and add other instances as you read your Bible.

1. Abraham paid tithes (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-11).
2. Jacob paid tithes (Genesis 28:22).
3. Levi paid tithes in Abraham (Hebrews 7:9).
4. Levites were to tithe on tithes received (Numbers 18:25-32).
5. Hezekiah and Israel tithed (II Chronicles 31:1-21).
6. Nehemiah and Israel tithed (Nehemiah 10:37-39; 12:44; 13:1-14).
7. Solomon possibly referred to tithing (Proverbs 3:9-10).
8. Malachi admonished Israel to tithe (Malachi 3:8-12).
9. Scribes and Pharisees tithed (Matthew 23:23).
10. Christians accepted tithing as a part of their obligation, for neither Christ nor the apostles taught any alternate financial program. They taught that we ought to tithe (Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:1-11; I Corinthians 9:1-18, II Corinthians 9:6-7).

Great people of the past and present who have tithed should serve as examples, role models, and mentors to Christians today.

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C. TITHING UNDER GRACE

Some have used the age of grace as a loophole and excuse for every conceivable form of unholy living. As a further extension of their interpretation of grace, they feel completely free from any financial obligation to God. God never intended for grace to liberate us from responsibility and holy living. It rather becomes God's agent and catalyst through which we obtain the power and right to perform His will. Grace alone should compel us to pay tithes and offerings, giving liberally both of ourselves and of our substance.

1. Obligation to Tithe

   Mercy, faith, and justice are weighty matters deserving to be exercised by Christians. These we ought to do along with paying our tithes (Matthew 23:23). Can our obligation to tithe be less than Abraham's, since we are considered to be His children? (Galatians 3:7).

2. Purpose of Tithing

   Drawing from past scriptural parallels, we conclude that tithing is for the support of those who minister to others. The minister over a flock should have the oversight of the tithing. If more than enough for his support is generated, then he should place it in God's work in a discreet and honest manner. All ministers are obligated to pay tithes from the tithes they receive. Study Malachi 3:8-12; Numbers 18:20-32; Nehemiah 10:38-39; I Corinthians 9:1-18.

   Some have allowed modern corporate, American monetary systems to replace scriptural precedent. While the original intent may have been good, this practice of placing tithing in the hands of laymen to be spent at their discretion violates Scripture. The result of this practice is a hireling ministry, controlled, hired, and fired by those in charge of the treasury. Consequently the voice of biblical authority to preach against sin is silenced! Since some people can be bought, they serve as hirelings to the whims and wishes of a carnal, pleasure-minded, worldly group called a church. Such ministers and congregations face condemnation and destruction.

   Our world needs an unmuzzled ministry—preachers who are not hirelings. Modern Tobiahs need to be cast out of the tithing chamber just as Nehemiah did in his day (Nehemiah 13:4-14). The ministry must be returned to its rightful place as the voice and spokesman for God,

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unmuzzled and unfettered in every aspect (I Corinthians 9:1-18).

3. Blessing of Tithing

God's commanded blessing rests upon those who tithe, and a curse rests upon those who refuse to do so (Malachi 3:8-12). Often we overlook the "devourer" in Malachi's teaching. From Scripture and my experience in working with others, I have witnessed this unseen devourer consume professing Christian's possessions when they refused to tithe. When we withhold from God what we owe Him, we curse ourselves (Malachi 3:9; Nehemiah 13:1-14; II Chronicles 31:1-21; Haggai 1:1-11). (Priests are included in Malachi 2:1-10.)

I grew up in a family of tithers. From earliest childhood, not far removed from the Great Depression era, my parents tithed even in their poverty. For near forty years I have witnessed firsthand on a personal basis the blessing of tithing. Some things I may not fully know and understand how to do to please God, but tithing and how much of my income is tithe I both understand and practice. You, your family, and God's work will be blessed when you tithe.

Unquestionably, tithing provides blessings for many when practiced by God's people (Proverbs 3:8-9; Malachi 3:10; II Corinthians 9:6-7).

4. Rewards of Tithing

Accompanying tithe paying are many temporal as well as spiritual rewards. Beyond a reward here, tithing no doubt holds an eternal reward. Paying tithes will not save us, but a refusal to pay tithes can cause us to lose our relationship of saving faith in God. Our eternal reward is predicated in part upon this aspect of our lives. As we have already proved, benefits beyond description occur when we pay tithes and offerings.

List as many rewards of tithing as you can think of from a scriptural and experiential standpoint. These seven come to mind:

a. You know you have done your part to help.
b. You know you have been honest with God and have not robbed Him.
c. You know you have obeyed the Bible; you have withheld nothing from God.
d. You know you can claim God's promises and provisions.

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e. You know you have laid up treasure in heaven.
f. You know God has rebuked the unseen devourer from your life.
g. You know you are prepared to face God in judgment and receive a just reward.

More rewards that I can present here await you when you tithe. In view of this, would it not be foolish not to tithe?

REFLECTIONS

Money plays an important role in our lives as well as the Scripture. To quibble, argue over, and withhold a mere ten percent of our increase from a work so great as God's is unreasonable. Tithing is fair to all; none are discriminated against. It is a reasonable, workable, proven, centuries-old plan. No one has ever devised a more sensible or scriptural plan.

I ought to tithe, I enjoy tithing, and I have been and will be rewarded for tithing. Will you join me in this Christian exercise of obedience to the Bible?

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 13

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO PAY TITHES

1. Christ condemned the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23 for what they had _____ rather than what they had done.
2. It is acceptable for churches and ministers to ignore Internal Revenue Service and governmental laws. T_____F_____.
3. Money is not to be used, touched, or talked about in any fashion by ministers or churches. T _____F_____.
4. The _____ of _____ is the root of all evil. Scripture reference: _____.
5. Along with paying tithes we are not to leave off _____, _____, _____, according to Matthew 23:23.
6. Tithes is _____ percent of our increase.
7. Tithing was practiced at least _____years before the law.
8. Jacob promised God 1/4 - 1/5 - 1/25 - 1/16 - 1/3 - 1/10 of all He blessed him with. (Circle one)
9. Give three Old Testament passages supporting tithing under the law. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
10. Give two examples of those who tithed. (A) _____, (B) _____.
11. According to Paul's teaching, spiritually we are the children of (underline one): Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Noah.
12. Tithing is to be used for _____.
13. A minister should be on a salary controlled by a board or committee, and he should be fired when someone becomes unhappy with him. T _____ F_____.
14. Nehemiah _____Tobiah out of the tithing chamber.
15. When we withhold from God what is rightfully His, we _____ ourselves with a curse.
16. A blessing rests upon those who tithe, and God rebukes the unseen _____ for our sake (Malachi 3:8-12).

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17. Tithing provides a _____for many when God's peopl practice it.
18. Paying tithes will not save us, but refusing to pay tithes can cause us to lose our relationship of saving faith in God. T_____ F_____.
19. Name three rewards of tithing:
    (A) You know _____.
    (B) You know _____.
    (C) You know _____.
20. Tithing is unfair, discriminatory, unreasonable, and unproven. T _____ F _____.

LESSON 14

NOTES:

THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART V

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET
JOHN 13:1-17

Note: A complete lesson on communion and Footwashing is found in Volume I. Study it in conjunction with this lesson.

On first impression, this subject may appear to be quite bold, even a little far-fetched, until we become aware that footwashing is a biblical teaching instituted by our Lord in the New Testament.

Due to our culture, along with the inherent pride of people, we immediately draw back from such statement, especially when we are told we ought (it is necessary, a duty, an obligation) to wash one another's feet.

Christendom as a whole does not embrace this practice. Only a few groups have practiced washing one another's feet throughout church history. On certain occasions certain people in leadership in the Catholic church will wash someone's feet, but it has never been a common practice of the membership as a whole. Other religious bodies condemn this observance, disregard its place in Scripture, and criticize those who practice it.

I have often wondered why Christianity as a whole has negated the importance of this deed while seeking to imitate and emulate every other action of Jesus when He was on earth. In the land of Israel, every event connected to Christ seems to be highlighted by impressive markers, buildings, and memorials. People have studied every move, footstep, action, and word of Jesus with the dream of somehow replicating the same in Christianity. Dramas, sermons, and ordinances of every type and sort are set forth by mainline denominations, but relatively few of them declare the importance of this act. Yet many accepted practices among them were never alluded to, much less practiced by Christ.

Since many people are so intent on instituting deeds performed by Christ, why do they ignore the simple act of footwashing? Surely any person from minister to peasant could partake of this easily understood, skill-less task. Why seek to imitate Christ in other things and not this? To catch His spirit and implement His conduct among us is the goal of this lesson.

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Without reluctance we as Christians should quickly arise to the occasion when we can literally perform for another Christian one of the actual deeds that Jesus performed. What an opportunity to be like Jesus is afforded us in this very unpretentious act of washing one another's feet!

Some argue that since only one Gospel writer mentioned this event, we are at liberty to toss it out as irrelevant. They argue that it is not applicable to us since it is only mentioned once. But any serious student of the Scriptures is aware of many one-time occurrences in the Gospels. Other one-time acts of Jesus are defended as important, worthy of proclamation and practice among Christians. Likewise, we should observe John 13:1-17, although only one Gospel writer recorded the event. Paul also placed emphasis on footwashing in I Timothy 5:9-10. How then can we deem this portion of Scripture irrelevant and unimportant while defending others as applicable? The answer is we cannot! We must take the whole of truth, seeking to implement its precepts and practices in our lives.

Jesus instituted communion, or the Eucharist, at the same occasion, with the Passover supper immediately preceding Jesus' act of washing His disciple's feet. The communion service has become an ordinance and practice of Christendom as a whole throughout the world. When we observe our Lord's death, remembering His broken body and shed blood, what would prohibit us from extending the meeting to include washing one another's feet just as Jesus practiced and taught?

Footwashing is an easily understood and comprehensible deed to perform. For modesty's sake, men should wash only men's feet, and women likewise. Engaging in this Christ-established act requires only that we take a pan of water, splash water on the feet of our fellow Christian, and then dry them with a towel. Then we allow him or her, as the case may be, to wash our feet. While engaged in this proceeding, we should pray for and bless one another, allowing the spirit of Christ to flow between us. It certainly is not difficult, is it? But it certainly is scriptural!

A. **OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND**

Washing one's feet when bathing as an act of bodily cleanliness has been a practice throughout recorded human history. However it is evident from the Old Testament that washing only the feet as an act of cleansing was practiced since early times. Due to dusty roads and the type of footwear worn, if any at all was worn, it became a common practice to wash a guest's feet, or at least furnish water for him to do so. Although no spiritual significance seems attached to the act of washing one another's feet in Old Testament times, the practice itself did become common.

In ancient times washing the feet of one's guest was performed by a servant,

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since it was considered a menial task below the dignity of the householder. For Jesus, the Lord and Master who had come to establish a kingdom, to wash His disciple's feet sent shock waves through them. Such countercultural practice certainly seemed out of place for Him, who was God manifest in the flesh, to perform.

Study the following Old Testament references regarding the washing of feet or providing water for guests to wash their feet: Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judges 19:21; I Samuel 25:41; II Samuel 11:8; Songs of Solomon 5:3.

Jesus rebuked Simon for not at least furnishing Him water with which to wash His feet upon entering his home. Consequently, it is evident that this Old Testament practice of hospitality carried over into the New Testament era. Jesus on the same occasion commended a woman for washing His feet with her tears and drying them with her hair (Luke 7:44).

B. **NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING**

We have just seen that the Old Testament custom of washing a guest's feet or furnishing water for him to wash his feet existed in the New Testament era during Jesus' time. Therefore when Jesus, their Lord and Master, began to wash His disciple's feet, they were astounded.

Just as notable, on the same night, Jesus established what would become known as the Lord's Supper, communion, or the Eucharist. This ceremonial act of eating unleavened bread and partaking of the fruit of the vine would serve as a replacement for the ancient Passover feast. God had instituted the Passover feast when he delivered Israel from Egypt, and Israel observed it annually. Now Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed for us, and we are to remember Him and commemorate this event, not with a Passover feast but in a communion service. Guidelines for this ordinance were established by our Lord (Matthew 26:26-29) and Paul (I Corinthians 11:1-2, 20-34).

Immediately following Jesus' institution of communion, He instituted another important ceremony: footwashing among believers. Jesus' act was more than the ancient, traditional custom of showing hospitality to one's guest. He was their Lord and Master, they His subjects. He, who as God, made the world (John 1:1-4) and was now manifested in flesh (I Timothy 3:16), stooped to the place of a servant (Philippians 2:5-10). The One they had observed forgiving sins, walking on water, raising the dead, and healing the sick, humbled Himself in their presence as would a slave.

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Never before had Jesus instituted in a communion service with His disciples. Neither had He participated in washing other's feet, although a woman had washed His feet with her tears (Luke 7:44). Consequently we can conclude from these connecting events on the same night, that if one of these acts held significant import for the church so did the other.

Jesus gave more direct instructions concerning washing one another's feet than He gave about communion. I firmly believe from the whole of Scripture that Jesus instituted communion as an act and ordinance among Christendom so long as the church is on earth. This I teach and practice consistently. However, not one Gospel writer stated that Jesus said, "Ye ought to take communion," or "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you," or "If ye do not observe communion with me ye have no part with me," or "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Yet He did make every one of these statements relative to washing feet. If we accept Christ's institution of communion (and we should), why should we not accept His institution of washing one another's feet? I accept and practice both on the basis of Scripture. The washing of one another's feet is an important act and ordinance of Christian service.

C. **REASONS FOR WASHING ONE ANOTHER'S FEET**

Upon observation we find several reasons from John's writing as to why modern Christians should wash one another's feet. Submission to one another, humility, servanthood, and fellowship accompany this service. Jesus declared the following indisputable reasons for washing one another's feet:

1. Gives Us a Part with Christ

   Peter resisted Jesus' effort to wash his feet, to which Jesus replies, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). *Part* comes from the Greek word *meros* (mer'-os), meaning a section or allotment, a division or share, or portion. Realizing the seriousness of not being able to share in fellowship, communion, and participation with Christ caused Peter immediately to submit to Jesus washing his feet. He even wanted his hands and head washed if it meant having a *part* with Christ. Here Jesus established rule and precedent; after salvation only the literal washing of one's feet by another is necessary to fulfill this portion of Christ's plan, not the washing of our hands and head also.

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Having a *part* with Christ is necessary. Simon of Samaria, because of his condition, had neither *part* nor lot (Acts 8:21). Judas once had a *part* in the ministry but lost it; his *part* being obtained by Matthias (Acts 1:17, 25). In view of the essential role of having a *part* with Christ, study what the Bible teaches concerning our being partakers of Christ's nature, sufferings, holiness, spirit, etc. (See Hebrews 6:4; 12:10, I Peter 4:13; II Peter 1:4.)

Certainly this statement was applicable to more than just Simon Peter. Would it not have applied to the other disciples had they refused? Would it not apply to us if we refuse? What a reason to wash one another's feet—we obtain a part with Christ.

2. Spiritual Cleansing Occurs

Peter wanted his head and hands washed along with his feet if this established his part with Christ. To his request Jesus replied, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10). *Berkley Translation*—"A bathed person does not need to be washed, except his feet, but is completely cleansed; and you are cleansed." *Weymouth Translation*—"Anyone who has lately bathed," said Jesus, "does not need to wash more than his feet, but is clean all over." *New International Version*—"A person who has had a bath need only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean." *Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text*—"He who has bathed does not need except to wash his feet only, for he is already all clean."

"Washed" in this verse comes from the Greek word *louo* (loo'-o), meaning to bathe the whole person, to wash. *Loutron* (loo-tran') is a derivative of this word and means a bath, baptism, or washing. When we are saved we are washed, totally cleansed through the birth of water and Spirit by the blood of Christ (John 3:1-8; 13:10; I Corinthians 6:11; II Peter 2:22; Revelation 1:5; Titus 3:5). "Wash," when referring to the feet, comes from the Greek word *nipto* (nip'-to), meaning to cleanse especially the hands, feet, or face; perform ablution, wash.

Salvation provides our initial washing but on our heavenly journey, just as the road dust collected on the feet of Eastern travelers, defiling elements cling to us in our spiritual walk. Washing one another's feet encourages an attitude of repentance and humility that keeps us clean.

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3. Is a Command of Christ

   Jesus said, "Ye also *ought* to wash one another's feet." (John 13:14). Recall the definition of *ought*. It means an obligation, debt, or something necessary. How much more emphatic could our Lord be in instituting this ordinance? If we accept other biblical practices proposed in this study as Christian obligations, we should unquestionably accept this one. Oh! Consistency thou art a jewel!

4. Christ Has Given Us an Example

   "Example" here (John 13:15) comes from the Greek word *hupodeigma* (hoop-od'-igue-mah), meaning an exhibit of imitation or warning, specimen, adumbration or pattern. Jesus emphatically declared concerning this example, "That ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). If the apostles carried out Jesus' command here, for us to be apostolic must not we do the same?

   Christ's example, was not taken lightly by the apostles; neither should we view it lightly or in disdain. Peter described the exemplary life of our Lord as one for us to emulate, encouraging us to follow in His steps (I Peter 2:19-23). If we observe one example advanced by our Lord, should we not observe them all? Does this not include washing one another's feet?

5. We Are Not Greater Than Our Lord

   As servants of God we are not greater than our Lord, no more than one who is sent can become greater than the one who sent him (John 13:16). If we conduct ourselves in a fashion that we consider to be above what Jesus did, we destroy our submission. Servanthood requires submission to both the example and command of the Master. Failing to do so indicates pride, superiority, and rebellion, manifested in our refusal to follow the Master's instructions.

   Pride, along with other unchristian characteristics, is broken when we engage in footwashing. In this we show forth our submission to His lordship and mastery, setting Him above us to His rightful place. Refusing to wash our fellow disciple's feet sends a message to Christ that we consider ourselves above Him. Such a spirit and rebellion is inexcusable in His sight. Let us return Christ to His rightful place as Lord of our lives. One way to do so is through the act of washing one another's feet.

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6. Obedience Produces Happiness

   Knowing and obeying Christ's commands produces happiness (blessedness) in the life of a saint (John 13:17). Certainly we now know what to do; Scripture has taught us! Surely we can obey; washing another's feet requires no special skill, only willingness and submission.

   Jesus asked His disciples, "Know ye what I have done to you?" (John 13:12). He then proceeded to explain His position, His actions, and His requirements. Clearly he defined his role and theirs, so they would *know* (perceive, be sure, be aware of, and understand) what they were to do.

   Can we deny knowledge of Jesus' position as Lord and master? Do we not know that He washed His disciples' feet? Are we not made aware by the Bible that we are to wash one another's feet? (I Timothy 5:9-10). Knowing and obeying are two different things and worlds apart. Only when we do these things will happiness come.

7. We Are Obeying God's Word

   As a summary of all reasons for washing one another's feet, we are compelled to admit that doing so puts us in compliance with the Bible. Failing to do so places us in the unenviable position of ignoring or disregarding God's Word.

   "Blessed are they that do his commandments" (Revelation 22:14). Loving God is the thing that will cause us to keep His commandments (John 14:15). Refusing to obey God's Word indicates a lack of love for Him and will ultimately bring His eternal wrath upon us. Every time we wash another's feet as an act of Christian's service, we are obeying God's Word.

REFLECTIONS

I have sincerely endeavored to present to you a fair, unbiased, insight into what God's Word teaches us that we "ought" to do. I agree that to the uninitiated the act of washing another's feet sounds repulsive. You may question, "Why should I do that?" However, upon examination of the Bible and the reasons it establishes for us, how can we refuse to wash our fellow Christian's feet?

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Blessings await you and your fellow believers when you begin this biblical practice in your congregation. God's promise of happiness will accompany your obedience to Christ's example and command.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 14

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET

1. How many New Testament passages mention washing one another's feet? _____ Where are they?_____._____.
2. What is another word for communion? _____.
3. Jesus rebuked _____for not providing water with which to wash His feet. Scripture: _____.
4. The woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears dried His feet with her _____. Scripture: _____
5. Communion replaces or serves in substitution form the Old Testament _____ _____feast.
6. List two of the four things Jesus said about feet washing that He never said about communion. (A) _____(B)_____.
7. List seven reasons for washing one another's feet. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____, (E) _____, (F)_____, (G) _____.
8. *Part* comes from the Greek word_____and means _____.
9. It is necessary to have your hands and head washed when you wash one another's feet. Yes _____No _____.
10. In view of this lesson, does washing one another's feet help us have a "part" with Christ? Yes_____ No_____. Explain in a brief statement why you feel this way._____.
11. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his _____."
12. The Greek word *louo* means _____, the word *loutron* means _____.
13. *Wash* comes from the Greek word _____and means _____.
14. Is footwashing a command of Christ? Yes_____ No _____. Explain briefly. _____.

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15. In footwashing Jesus provided us an _____ that we should do as He did (John 13:15).
16. The _____ is not greater than his Lord.
17. What is broken when we engage in washing one another's feet? _____.
18. Knowing and obeying Christs' commands produces _____.
19. "Know" (John 13:12) means _____.
20. Blessed are those who keep His_____.
    Scripture: _____.

LESSON 15

NOTES:

THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART VI

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WALK AS HE WALKED
I JOHN 2:1-6; I THESSALONIANS 4:1

"Walk" in our Scripture text and in the context of this lesson involves more than a method of physical locomotion. More is involved than going about on foot for either exercise or pleasure. Unless disabled, most are able to use their legs and feet to take steps, creating an action known universally as walking. However, the Scripture opens to us an aspect, or concept of walking other than the physical exercise of taking steps with our feet.

God often uses terms in His Word that are common to humans in the natural realm to describe spiritual truths. Even in His divinity God accommodates Himself to us by describing Himself in terms common to us. Through these we come to know God, how to communicate with Him, and how to please Him. The Bible speaks of our eating the Bread of Life (John 6:33-58), drinking living water (John 4:14), hearing what the Spirit says (Revelation 2:7), and sitting in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), along with many other comparative terms. Through these a commonality of knowledge and understanding of spiritual things exists for all humanity. These are universally understood terms by all people everywhere, providing us with principles from which to preach and to practice God's Word.

From Genesis to Revelation we encounter the terms *walk, walked*, and *walking* concerning both God and man. More often than not these terms apply to a spiritual exercise where either God or man is involved. The earliest use of the term is in Genesis 3:8: "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." From then until now, God, who is Spirit and invisible, accommodates Himself to our thinking by employing terms such as "dwell in them, and walk in them" (II Corinthians 6:16). From the day of Enoch, who was described as one who "walked with God; and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24), until this present time humans have used and understood the scriptural terminology of walking with God.

Under grace, in the New Testament era, Bible writers continued to use this centuries-old term as applicable to Christian experience and conduct. By doing so they have provided us with a profound, yet simple, insight into our relationship with God. Even a child can grasp what it means to walk with God or to walk after certain things.

Our pursuit, as saints of the Most High, is not portrayed in the general sense as a hurried,

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rushed, helter-skelter experience. While it is not a lazy ambling along, lacking urgency and direction, neither is it a frenzied, nerve-racking episode. Walking with Him indicates a paced, purposed, progressing involvement geared individually to each saint. He who led Israel by a pillar of cloud and fire tempered the pace for warriors, women, and babes. He now gently leads us in paths of righteousness, considering the path of each pilgrim, tempering the wind to the shorn lamb.

God's Word is replete with terms such as *path, tread, pilgrim, highway, step, feet, way, lame*, and *lead*. These are all interwoven with the concept of walking in one way or another. Therefore, when we encounter the scriptural injunction that we ought to walk as He walked, we are not taken aback by some deep theological, hard-to-understand term. We have learned that when we are told that we "ought" to do something, it is an obligation, debt, or necessity for us. Subsequently we begin to seek out how He walked to learn how He wants us to walk. When we search for an answer as to how He walked, God's Word reveals to us many beautiful, understandable truths on the subject.

"Walk," as used in this lesson, comes from the Greek word *peripateo* (per-ee-pat-eh'-o), which means to tread all around, walk at large, live, deport oneself, follow, or be occupied with. I would like to engage us in a study of how we are to walk, rather than go into an in-depth study of Christ's exemplary spirit and manner of life. Christ's walk is easily discernible and definable throughout the Scripture, for He left us an example "that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21). Ordering our way, as set forth in the Bible and in this lesson, will place us in the steps of Christ.

A. **HOW WE ARE TO WALK**

God shows us and even commands us to walk in the manner He established in His Word. Upon our investigation and study, the paths we are to journey become well-defined and distinct. Due to the extent of each of these points, the student or teacher is left with the responsibility of in-depth research. Space limits comments, but we will present enough to clarify each topic; these are fairly easy subjects to study, with extensive material on each.

1. Walk in Newness of Life

"Newness" (Romans 6:4) comes from the Greek word *kainotes* (kahee-not'-ace), meaning renewal, newness, freshness. Paul referred to Christ's burial as a type of baptism and His resurrection as a type of the Holy Ghost in Romans 6:4 (See I Corinthians 15:1-4). When we are born again of water and Spirit (John 3:1-8), we become new creatures in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17). As Christ was raised from the dead, so are we raised from spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1-6) in the like-

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ness of His resurrection (Romans 6:1-6). Now we serve God in the newness of spirit, not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:6). Walking with Christ is walking in a new life.

2. Walk in the Spirit

   Now that we are Spirit-filled, we are to walk after the leadership of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). Paul established three beautiful truths for the saint relative to the Spirit in Galatians 5:16, 18, 25: (1) We are to walk in the Spirit, (2) we are to be led of the Spirit, and (3) we are to live in the Spirit. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit (Romans 8:4). Walking in the Spirit will protect us from fulfilling the lusts of the flesh. The flesh and Spirit are contrary to one another; the victor of the two will exhibit itself either in the works of the flesh or in the fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:17-23; Romans 8:5-9).

3. Walk after His Commandments

   Concurring in lifestyle and spirit with the teachings of the Scripture is the responsibility of every born-again Christian. John declared, "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments" (II John 6). "Commandment" here does not refer to just the Ten Commandments or law of Moses; it is the whole of Scripture applicable to Christian conduct.

   Obedience to scriptural commands demonstrates our love for God. Loving God and submitting to His Word are inseparable forces in our lives (I John 5:1-3; John 14:15). Accompanying our love for God will be a love for our brethren, a further extension of proof that we truly love Him (I John 4:7-21).

   Paul admonished us to "walk according to this rule" (Galatians 6:16), and "let us walk by the same rule" (Philippians 3:16). "Rule" is from the Greek work *kanon* (kan-ohn'), meaning a straight reed, i.e., a rod, a rule, a standard of faith and practice, a boundary, a sphere of activity. We are to measure ourselves, not by one another but "according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us" (II Corinthians 10:13). Nothing less than God's Word could be the rule that Paul referred to in this passage.

   When we walk in truth (III John 3-4), after His commandments (II John 6), and according to the rule God has distributed to us

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(II Corinthians 10:12-13), then we can truly say that we are walking in Him (Colossians 2:6). Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6). What a testimony! May you and I attain grace and power to proceed on the same path. Only then can it be said of us as it was of the early church: they were "walking in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31).

4. Walk in the Light

Scripture compares living in sin to a person sitting or walking in darkness (Matthew 4:16; I John 2:11). It compares salvation to a person leaving or being called out of darkness into God's marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Now that we are in the light, we are to "walk" in the light (John 11:9; Ephesians 5:8; I John 1:7).

Outside the church, darkness pervades the spiritual atmosphere. Each of us should take care lest the light in us become darkness (Matthew 6:22-23). Let us hear the warnings to believers concerning walking in the light, giving heed lest darkness engulf us again:

a. Cast off works of darkness and put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12).
b. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them (Ephesians 5:11).
c. Light and darkness have no communion (II Corinthians 6:14).
d. When we walk in darkness we do not know where we are going (John 12:35; I John 2:11).
e. The day of the Lord will overtake as a thief those who are in darkness (I Thessalonians 5:1-9).
f. We are to be blameless, harmless, and without rebuke in a crooked and perverse nation, "among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:15).
g. Our loins are to be girded and our lights burning as we await the Lord's return (Luke 12:35-36).

Holding to, walking in, or keeping aflame this marvelous light is a solemn charge but also a rewarding experience.

5. Walk by Faith

In contrast to walking by faith is walking by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

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Walking by sight involves walking in paths calculated by human reasoning as the best way of life. Here we depend on carnal thinking to direct us in our choices. Whatever our physical eyes desire we choose, and we become influenced by the times to keep in step with society. Walking by faith is trusting the Word and Spirit when doing so seems in direct contradiction to human reason. In the natural world, the alternative to traveling by sight is flying by instruments and sailing by radar. In the spiritual realm it is walking by faith.

The hope that saves us is embodied in this experience (Romans 8:24-25); it is that unseen force of eternal optimism. This walk requires the innate ability to see the unseen, which is eternal (II Corinthians 4:17-18). Moses walked this road where no visible footprints appeared (Hebrews 11:27). Abraham knew what it was to walk this walk; we too are called to "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham" (Romans 4:12).

6. Walk Honestly

In Romans 13:11-14 we find the words of this topic along with other pointed instructions to believers:

a. *Let us* cast off the works of darkness.
b. *Let us* put on the armor of light.
c. *Let us* walk honestly as in the day.

"Honestly" in the original text means decorously, decently, honorably, and becomingly. Contrasting this, Paul told us to "walk not in" (1) rioting, (2) drunkenness, (3) chambering, (4) wantonness, (5) strife, and (6) envying. Scripture enjoins Christians to walk honestly in every aspect of life, especially before the unsaved (I Thessalonians 4:12). It further admonishes us to walk in wisdom toward non-Christians (Colossians 4:5). Wisdom and honesty should be the hallmark of every saint, especially in the presence of sinners.

Webster defines *honesty* as: "(1) The state or quality of being honest. (2) A refraining from lying, cheating, or stealing; being truthful, trustworthy, or upright. (3) Sincerity, fairness, straightforwardness." These characteristics should define the life of every professing Christian. The Bible teaches honesty in every measure and aspect as set forth in these definitions. Read the following passages relative to this subject:

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Hebrews 13:18; Acts 6:3; II Corinthians 8:21; 13:7; Romans 12:17; I Peter 2:12.

7. Walk in Love

Love is one of the major themes of the Bible. It is something we are to walk in (follow, be occupied with, order our behavior in, regulate our life by) according to Paul (Ephesians 5:1-2). Love is a powerful motivator; we should always allow it to guide our lives.

Note: Study the lesson in this series "Christians Ought to Love One Another" for an in-depth view of this subject.

8. Walk Worthy of the Vocation Wherewith We Are Called

"Vocation" in this verse (Ephesians 4:1) comes from the Greek word *klesis* (klay-sis'), meaning an invitation; its verb form means to be invited, appointed, or called. Although Scripture uses this word only once, it speaks of our calling as Christians quite often.

Paul's emphasis here is on conducting or ordering our lives (walking) in a fashion worthy (appropriately, after a godly sort, deserving, fitting) of such a high call. Although we are unworthy of God's grace and call, we can and must conduct ourselves commensurate with such a holy invitation.

a. We are to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).
b. Paul prayed for the Thessalonican saints that "God would count you worthy of this calling" (II Thessalonians 1:11).
c. We are to "walk worthy of God, who has called us into his kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:12).

Consider the call or invitation God has given you to be a part of His glorious kingdom. If you have accepted that call and taken His name upon you in baptism and have been filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38), then act like a Christian (II Timothy 2:19). Take note of your calling from the following passage of Scripture. Add others to these as you study.

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a. We are called with a holy calling (II Timothy 1:9).
b. We are partakers of a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1).
c. We are to be holy since the One who called us is holy (I Peter 1:15).
d. We are called to be saints (I Corinthians 1:2).
e. We are called out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9).
f. We are called to peace (I Corinthians 7:15).
g. We are called to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3).

Beyond the original call to be a Christian, God often issues a special call or invitation to one of His servants for some specific work (Acts 13:3), ministry (Romans 1:1), or place (Acts 16:9-10). These, too, should walk worthy of the vocation wherein they are called.

9. Walk in Good Works

Study the whole of Ephesians 2:1-10 in context. Many times people isolate verses 8-9 from the text, resulting in misuse. Any Bible scholar knows that we cannot be saved from our sins by good deeds, human works, effort, or any like thing. God's grace alone saves us through faith. It is not of ourselves; it is a gift of God. However, this does not preclude our being obedient to God's plan of salvation (John 3:1-8; Acts 2:1-4, 38). Those who misuse this passage by taking it out of context often berate and condemn those who strive to live a life of separation, holiness, and purity. They tell us that we are trying to obtain salvation by our works. Nothing could be more of an affront to intelligence and truth. Salvation comes by grace through faith as a gift of God; it then empowers and motivates us to do works of righteousness. Those who lack works of righteousness lack salvation, since they lack genuine faith, which invariably produces good works. Works do not produce salvation; they proceed from salvation.

God has ordained and designed Christians to walk in good works (Ephesians 2:10). Our body without our spirit is dead! Faith without works is dead! (James 2:26). Faith without works is dead; works are an exhibition of the unseen force of faith in the believer. (Study closely James 2:14-26.)

At every opportunity we are to do good to all people, *especially* those who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10). God has ordained for those saved by His grace through faith to walk in good works.

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10. Walk Circumspectly

"Circumspectly" is found only once in the Bible (Ephesians 5:15) and comes from the Greek word *akribos* (ak-ree-boce'), meaning exactly, diligently, perfectly. "Circumspect" is found only once in the Bible (Exodus 23:13) and was used by the Lord in warning Israel. It comes from the Hebrew word *shamar* (shaw-mar'), meaning to hedge about, protect, guard, attend, beware, take heed, look narrowly, and preserve.

From these words it becomes obvious that God expects us to conduct our lives in a careful, circumspect manner. Throughout His Word, the Lord condemns broad, liberal, undefined interpretations of Scripture. He also condemns loose, compromising, unholy lives. The walk of a Christian is through a straight gate and on a narrow path (Matthew 7:14). Every Christian should be circumspect in every aspect of his life.

The Word of God clearly defines our path as Christians. Our responsibility now is to walk in the way God has ordained. While this is impossible within ourselves, He will empower us by His Spirit and enable us to follow Him. Obscurity often clouds our way, but during those times let us commit our lives to keep the Word, holding to His unseen hand.

B. HOW WE ARE NOT TO WALK

From the negative viewpoint, God has instructed us not to walk on certain paths. Even as Christians we can become confused or enticed by some subversive force or person into areas of conduct that we should not engage in. Viewing these briefly, yet carefully, should suffice for each of us. God's Word points out seven roads that Christians are not to travel on. Each is distinctly marked, "Wrong Way." Walking these roads only leads to hurt and ruin.

1. We Are Not to Walk Disorderly

"Disorderly" is from the Greek word *ataktos* (at'-ak-tos), meaning unarranged, irregularly, unruly, and insubordinate. Christians are not only to refrain from such conduct, but they are to withdraw from professing saints who act or behave in a disorderly manner (II Thessalonians 3:6-18). Hypocritical, insincere, treacherous people should not be a part of your inner circle of friends or those with whom we have fellowship. Due to some things contaminating us, we have to withdraw ourselves (II Timothy 3:5; I Corinthians 5:9-13). We should not walk

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disorderly or support others who may conduct themselves in such fashion.

2. We Are Not to Walk As Men

In I Corinthians 3:1-9 Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their carnality, envy, strife, and division over preachers of the gospel. As they defended their favorite ministers the situation apparently became seriously volatile among them. Paul told them that they were walking as men. Obviously this does not refer to the physical locomotion of a human body. It is rather a spiritual condition among them that he strongly condemned.

The Berkley translation says, "Are you not worldly-minded and do you not behave like the unconverted?" Christians must exercise caution in this area and all others, lest they "walk as men."

3. We Are Not to Walk in Darkness

Refer to point 4 under topic A concerning what we are to walk in. God's warning for us not to walk in darkness is specifically explained in conjunction with loving our brother (I John 2:11; 1:6; John 12:35). Hatred of our brother places us in the unenviable position of walking in darkness. This darkness (hatred) blinds our spiritual eyes, resulting in our losing our way.

4. We Are Not to Walk by Sight

Our walk is one of faith, not of sight (II Corinthians 5:7). (Refer to point 5, under topic A.) We have not yet seen Him whom we love (I John 4:20); until we behold Him, we must guide our lives by faith rather than by what we see.

Walking after our own intuitions (sight), indicates our lack of trust in God's ability to lead us. Our natural tendency is to rely on tangibles rather than intangibles in our decision making. We should ask God to help us refrain from depending on the visible and trust in the invisible.

5. We Are Not to Walk in Craftiness

Paul specifically addressed the ministry in this passage (II Corinthians 4:1-2). "Craftiness" is from the Greek word *panourgia* (pan-oorg-ee'-ah), meaning adroitness (in a bad sense), trickery, sophistry, cunning, and subtlety. True ministers will not engage in craftiness or handle the

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Word of God deceitfully; they will be open, honest, and trustworthy in presenting the Word. Such people establish the church to keep it from being tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness (Ephesians 4:11-14).

During Jesus' day, the chief priests and scribes sent spies to trick Jesus relative to paying tribute to Caesar. Jesus perceived their craftiness (subtlety or trickery) and confronted them on the matter (Luke 20:19-26). True believers will not resort to this type of conduct for any reason or to accomplish any purpose. Our lives should be open and honest before God and man; never should we be known or perceived as crafty individuals.

6. We Are Not to Walk in the Vanity of Our Mind

God sends warnings in His Word for saints not to conduct their lives as the Gentiles (heathen) do (Ephesians 4:17-32). "Vanity" in this verse is from the Greek word *mataiotes* (mat-ah-yot'-oce), meaning lack of utility, transience, depravity, emptiness, or profitless. Paul emphasized the spiritual condition of the Gentiles (heathen): "Having the understanding darkened . . . because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18). He further instructed believers to "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23).

Following our own notions, ideas, concepts, or imaginations will always put us in an opposing position to the leadership of the Word and Spirit. The reason we must be spiritually minded (Romans 8:5-9) is so we can pull down the strongholds of Satan. These are: (1) imaginations, (2) every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Christ, and (3) every thought that would be disobedient to Christ (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Human reasoning often runs counter to God's Word; therefore, we must not walk after the vanity of our mind. God's remedy for this problem is found in Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

7. We Are Not to Walk After the Flesh

"Flesh" in this study does not refer to the physical body with all its component parts. It has to do with our inherent nature received from Adam our father, including our base, carnal desires. Paul called it "the body of sin" (Romans 6:6), the part that is dead when Christ is in us (Romans 8:10).

In Romans 8:1-14 we find an interesting discourse on the power of the

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Spirit as opposed to the flesh. Walking after the flesh produces the following:

a. We have condemnation (verse 1).
b. The righteousness of the law is not fulfilled in us (verse 4).
c. We mind (exercise the mind, entertain, have sentiment, interest oneself) the things of the flesh (verse 5).
d. We are carnally minded (verse 6).
e. We are not subject to the law of God (verse 7).
f. We cannot please God (verse 8).
g. We shall die—spiritually (verse 13).

How important it then becomes to walk after the Spirit rather than after the flesh (Galatians 5:13-26; I Corinthians 2:14).

REFLECTIONS

Now we know where and how to walk, as well as where and how not to walk. God's Word has enlightened us regarding the path we are to travel. Things we are to walk after can only be found on the narrow way; all others comprise the broad way. Pursuing and walking after right things will culminate in our walking with Him in white clothing (Revelation 3:4).

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 15

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WALK AS HE WALKED

1. Under the topic of "How We Are to Walk" list the first five points.
   (A) _____, (B) _____,
   (C)_____, (D) _____,
   (E)_____.
2. Under the topic of "How We Are to Walk" list the last five points.
   (A) _____, (B) _____,
   (C)_____, (D) _____,
   (E)_____.
3. *Newness* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
4. Paul established three truths for the saint relative to the Spirit. What are they?
   (A) _____, (B) _____,
   (C)_____.
5. *Rule* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
6. We are not to measure ourselves by ourselves but "_____ _____."
7. Living in sin is compared to a person walking or sitting in _____.
8. We are to walk by faith, not by _____.
9. "Walk in the steps of that faith of our father _____."
10. *Honestly* in our study means _____.
11. *Vocation* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
12. We are to do good to all people, especially those who are of the household of _____.
13. *Circumspectly* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
14. The walk of a Christian is through a _____gate and on a _____path.

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15. List the first four things we are *NOT* to walk in.
    (A) _____, (B) _____,
    (C)_____, (D) _____.
16. List the last three things we are *NOT* to walk in.
    (A) _____, (B) _____,
    (C)_____.
17. *Disorderly* comes from the Greek word _____,
    meaning _____.
18. The Berkeley translation substitutes the word _____ for men.
19. *Craftiness* means _____.
20. Name three things that walking after the flesh produces.
    (A) _____
    (B) _____
    (C) _____

LESSON 16

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THINGS A CHRISTIAN OUGHT TO DO PART VII

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO BE HOLY
I PETER 1:14-16; II PETER 3:11

One of the many things that God commands Christians to do is to be holy. *Holy* comes from the Greek root word *hagios* (hag'-ee-os), meaning sacred, pure, blameless, consecrated, and saintly. From this basic word comes other words that in their extended forms convey the idea of something hallowed, sanctified, purified, and sacred.

In classical Greek the pagans used the word *holy* to mean something set apart *for the gods*. In the case of a Christian, it means to be *set apart for God*.

Due to the broad area that holiness or being holy covers, you would do well to study the subjects of sanctification, godliness, and the meaning of the words *saint* and *separation*. Since all these terms are connected to this lesson, it is impossible to exhaust the subject of holiness.

Christians need to be aware that holiness must be an active principle, shaping and regulating every sphere of their lives and activities. We must understand that holiness governs the body as well as the soul, since the body alone is the instrument through which the soul acts and expresses itself. Purity of life, purity of action, and purity of thought are befitting goals toward which each Christian must strive.

Peter set forth our past desires and pursuits when we were in sin (I Peter 1:14-16). During that time we "fashioned" (shaped, molded, conformed) ourselves according to our lusts. This state was one of "ignorance," not that we were necessarily lacking in intellectual prowess or ability, but lacking in the knowledge of God and His Word. Upon our coming to God, we received a model by which we are to fashion ourselves. God and His holiness became the standard by which we gauge our lives.

Holy or *holiness* describes the essence and character of God. It is for the goal of being holy that we are to strive and seek to fashion our lives. Peter's second epistle asks, since this world will be destroyed, "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God?" (II Peter 3:11-12). Consequently, being holy becomes an obligation for a Christian. (Refer to the meaning of the word *ought* in Part I.)

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Anything or anyone set apart to God and God alone is distinguished from others by being designated as *holy*.

A. Places such as inside the Tabernacle were called holy (Exodus 26:33; Hebrews 9:12, 24, 25). Behind the veil of the Tabernacle was the most holy place (Exodus 26:33-34). The New Testament refers to this area as the "Holiest of all" (Hebrews 9:3, 8).

B. Aaron's garments were called holy (Exodus 28:1-2) because they were set apart or distinguished from the usual daily dress of the Israelites. They were to be worn only by Aaron and his descendants.

C. God hallowed the ground around the burning bush and required Moses to take his shoes off before walking upon it because it was "holy ground" (Exodus 3:1-5).

D. The anointing oil was holy and was not to be used for any purpose other than what it was designated for (Exodus 30:22-33).

E. Angels, as created spirit beings, are called holy. They are different from both God and humans, being set apart for specific missions, as God directs (Acts 10:22; Hebrews 1:14).

F. God's Word is holy (Romans 1:2; II Timothy 3:15). No other writings can compare, or are equal to them; therefore, the Bible stands apart as pure and sacred.

G. Our "conversation," which means conduct, should be holy or different from that of sinners (I Peter 1:14-16; II Peter 3:11).

H. People who have in the past, as well as the present, been set apart unto God are rightfully called holy. *Saint* or *sanctified one* is derived from the word *holy* also. Being holy is an attainable standing before God and humanity. Others have reached this goal; so can we. Consider the following:

1. Holy prophets (Acts 3:21, II Peter 3:2).
2. Holy apostles (Ephesians 3:5).
3. Holy brethren (I Thessalonians 5:27; Hebrews 3:1).
4. Holy women (I Peter 3:5).
5. Holy men (II Peter 1:21).

I. In the truest sense, God alone holds the eminent position of being holy

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(Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; I Peter 1:16). This marked and majestic position sets him far above and separate from all else, although we too can be holy.

Note: The seraphim in Isaiah 6:3 and the four beasts in Revelation 4:8 stand before God crying, "Holy, holy, holy." Threefold repetition such as this, when used in Hebrew poetry, indicates the superlative degree. Surely from these verses we can conclude that God is the highest holiness. Isaiah refers to God as "The Holy One of Israel" twenty-five times in his writings. Even a casual perusal of the Scripture will convince us that holiness is an essential, inherent attribute of God.

The Bible sets forth numerous things as being holy due to their consecrated use in certain areas or for some specific time or purpose. Our study focuses upon our personal obligation to be holy.

A. **WHY WE ARE TO BE HOLY**

More often than not we hear about the aspects of inward and outward holiness without ever being told why we should be holy. However, God's Word in both testaments sets forth a reason why we are to be holy: "Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16; Leviticus 19:2; 20:26).

Holiness is not some abstract or mystical idea; it is a regulative principle in our everyday lives. Herein we are called not only to worship God but to imitate Him. Through our deeds and daily lives, we must reveal the divine nature of which we have been made partakers (II Peter 1:4). We must manifest by our purity and righteousness that we are of God and have truly been born again (John 3:1-8), born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible (I Peter 1:23).

While we cannot duplicate God's infinite majesty and eternity, we can certainly strive toward a purity that differentiates us from the loathsome, defiling world in which we live. Certainly in our seeking to be like God, we can show forth His love, mercy, kindness, and longsuffering along with being separated from the world.

Jesus Christ, both in His divinity and humanity, was separate from sinners (Hebrews 7:26). His identity as to who and what He was is easily defined. Being like Him is where the word *Christian* sprang from. Christians, therefore, are easily identifiable by their emulation of their founder.

God's call and command for us to be holy should provide the needed impetus to motivate us to obedience. Scripture presents no other reason, nor should we

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need any other than this easily understood one: *"Be ye holy for I am holy*." This alone constitutes the basis for our duty to sanctify ourselves. It is also a guarantee of our capacity to attain sanctification.

What a noble thought and challenge: God is holy and asks us to be holy! Because He has asked us to be holy, not only will He empower and enable us, but He will also show us ways, means, and methods through which we can achieve this goal.

B. **HOW WE ARE TO BE HOLY**

Since God has called us to be holy, we can attain and maintain this state. God never requires anything of humans without providing them with sufficient grace to accomplish the task.

Being bidden to be holy, we must understand that this demand has two aspects—one positive and the other negative.

1. Positive Aspect of Holiness

   The positive aspect of holiness may be called the *imitation of God*, or seeking to be like Him. Peter championed this view in calling on us not to fashion ourselves according to the former lusts but rather to conform our lives to God's holiness (I Peter 1:14-16). Seeking to be like Jesus, replicating His Spirit through our spirit, and showing forth His virtues should be our all-consuming desire.

   The early disciples were so much like Christ that they were called Christians (Acts 11:26). Imitating Christ in our individual lives is certainly a positive aspect of being holy.

2. Negative Aspect of Holiness

   The negative aspect of holiness means the withdrawal and separation from things impure and abominable in the eyes of God. If we are to be holy, we must deny some things to the flesh. Things acceptable to a Christ-rejecting, sinful world, designed by Satan though perpetrated by man, must be recognized for what they are—ploys to separate us from the holiness of God! True Christians not only seek to emulate Christ within, but they also withdraw from anything unholy. Holiness involves withdrawing from anything sinful, even to the point of abstaining from all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22).

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> Separation is a powerful Old and New Testament doctrine. We who are under grace are called to distinguish ourselves in every aspect of our lives as being separate people (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

When we correlate our lives with both the positive and negative aspects of holiness, we not only lay sins and weights aside (Hebrews 12:1), but we also manifest Christ in our lives. The Pharisees' failure and subsequent renunciation by Christ was not for their position on outward actions but their lack of an inward relationship with God (Matthew 23:1-33). Discipline alone, regardless of the motivation, has never made anyone holy. Disciplining the flesh in denying its desires must be balanced by seeking to imitate Christ.

We do not attain holiness by some monk-like hiding in a cave, denouncing human relationships and life among people. Rather we achieve it as we deny ungodliness by living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). Holiness finds its greatest expression when we in a Christ-like spirit fulfill the obligations of life in their simplest and most common details.

Armed with this balancing truth, we as Christians are to give careful attention to both aspects of holiness.

Describing every detail that we are to engage in or disengage ourselves from would be impossible. We are in a changing world! Evils peculiar to one generation may be replaced by another evil in the ensuing generation. Human inventions of state-of-the-art devices of wickedness are an ongoing problem. Something more elaborate, more appealing to our base nature, and more subtle is always being spewed forth by satanic forces. Evil in my lifetime of over half a century has been in a state of flux, never staid or arrested. I am convinced that this will continue until Satan's most devious ploy and plot culminates in a world leader known as the beast, or Antichrist.

So long as the church is in the world, it will be the responsibility of our leaders, the ministry, parents, and you as an individual to weigh cautiously everything in the light of truth. We cannot afford to allow the fashion centers of the world, movie stars, sports figures, politicians, and the media to set standards of lifestyle for the church. For too long, many have scorned strong apostolic preaching and teaching as old-fashioned, while seeking to emulate those around them rather than Christ.

Never has any society been subjected to a worldwide blitz of such wicked proportions as it has since the appearance of television and video productions. From Calcutta to Cairo, New York to San Francisco, even to the smallest hamlet, all ages have access to the latest fad and the most recent form of crime. The latest drug giving the highest high,

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and the alcohol and tobacco industry's latest brands are also portrayed. Along with all of these things comes a steady diet of violence, filthy conversation, murders, rape, perversion, and so on. To this pipeline of filth coming through movies and television has been added the medium of video with absolutely no regulation or censorship by any type of agency.

While we can acknowledge the value of these media in allowing instant access to current events and educational programs, these devices produce far more harm than good. Everything the Bible teaches against is portrayed by the movie industry as rewarding and fulfilling. How then can we who seek to be holy spend vast sums on such contrivances when the underlying motive of those who control them is not to promote right but cause ruin?

Standards once held as sacred, virtues once uncompromised, and lifestyles once the norm are now scorned as Pharisaism, asceticism, and legalism—mere chains of bondage to be broken and thrown off by the enlightened. Never has holiness been attacked by so many from so many angles, by those professing to be holy.

I appeal to your sense of morality, character, and decency to return to a Christ-centered, God-fearing, Bible-dictated lifestyle. Say what you will, God's Word does speak to us about every phase and facet of our lives, both inwardly and outwardly. New devices, inventions, fads, styles, pleasures, and entertainment, primarily of an evil content, will vie for our attention from now until the rapture of the church. As long as we are in this world, I appeal to you to be holy, simply because the God we serve is holy.

REFLECTIONS

Brothers and sisters, we are called with a holy calling (II Timothy 1:9). We are a holy nation and priesthood (I Peter 2:5, 9). God's church is to be holy and without blame (Ephesians 1:4; 5:27). If you are a minister, you are to be, among other things, just, holy, and temperate (Titus 1:5-9). Saints are to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God (Romans 12:1-2). We are to lift holy hands without wrath and doubting when we pray (I Timothy 2:8). To be in the first resurrection we must be holy (Revelation 20:6). Without holiness no one shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

Can any deny that "Christians Ought to Be Holy"? If you are a minister of the gospel, I appeal to and challenge you to preach the holiness of God and man's need to imitate it. Saints, whether young or old, I call on you to obey the Bible and your pastor as he preaches and teaches God's Word. Remember: Scripture is the final authority on all matters.

Holiness produces peace with others, ourselves, and God. Its rewards are many, while we practice it here, but we will receive its greatest reward when we hear Him say, "Well done!" These are "Things a Christian Ought to Do"!

Note: There are a few other scriptural references to things we ought to do other than the seven outlined in this series. They are either covered or alluded to under other topics, or else they are self-explanatory and easily understood. (See Ephesians 5:28; I Corinthians 11:7, 10; Romans 12:3; 15:1; Acts 5:29; 17:29; James 4:15.)

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 16

CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO BE HOLY

1. *Holy* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
2. In classical Greek, the word *holy* meant to _____.
3. For a Christian, the word *holy* means to _____.
4. Holiness governs the soul but not the body. T _____ F _____
5. What does the word *fashioning* mean in I Peter 1:14? _____
6. Anything or anyone set apart unto God is designated as _____.
7. The veil of the Tabernacle separated the _____ place.
8. List three things the Scriptures refer to as being holy. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
9. The _____ in Isaiah and the_____ in Revelation cry, "Holy, holy, holy" unto God.
10. Isaiah called God "the Holy One of Israel" _____ times in his writings.
11. Why are we to be holy? _____
    Scripture reference: _____.
12. Holiness is a regulative _____ in our everyday lives.
13. There are two aspects of holiness. They are: (A) the _____ aspect and (B) the _____aspect.
14. The early disciples were so much like Christ until they were called _____.
15. What is the positive aspect of holiness? _____
16. What is the negative aspect of holiness?_____
17. The Pharisees' failure was not so much in their outward action but their lack of _____.
18. Set forth the dangers in television, video, and movie theaters. _____
    _____
    _____
    _____.
19. We are to present our _____ a living sacrifice.
20. Complete this verse: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, _____ _____" (Hebrews 12:14).

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LESSON 17

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SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES PART I

FIRST—SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD
MATTHEW 6:24-34

Webster defines *priority* as the quality or condition of being prior; precedence in time, order, importance, etc. In studying the Bible, we quickly confront several things that God expects us to take special note of. Being human, we often try to chart our own course and establish certain ranks of importance in the things we pursue. Often we put secondary matters first, while relegating the things of God to some spare-time project.

While our intentions may be noble, with no desire to disobey the Scripture or offend God, we often do offend Him by allowing temporal matters to displace things of eternal worth. Reversing biblical procedure is common among people. We traffic in the trivial, spend our money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which does not satisfy (Isaiah 55:1-2). Blindly we go on hungry, thirsty, and dissatisfied when all we need is an adjustment of our value system and a rearranging of our priorities.

This series of studies presents a scriptural formula that will produce the relationship with God and our fellowman that we long for. However, for the formula to work, we must allow God's Word to dictate our priorities—not human reasoning, fleshly desires, or carnal concepts.

Forsaking the fountain of living water and hewing out our own cisterns will only produce more thirst (Jeremiah 2:13). Forsaking our way and our thoughts, seeking the Lord, and returning unto the Lord are prerequisites to salvation and inner peace (Isaiah 55:6-7). God's requirements and expectations of us often run counter to our ways and plans. Therefore, submission to biblical directives and putting them first in our lives are necessary.

Throughout this series of studies, we will establish the biblical priority for each subject. This does not imply that secondary matters are not important. In fact, they are so important and impressed upon our minds so indelibly that we tend to put them first. From this frame of reference, problems develop by our putting the proverbial cart before the horse. Our humanity and carnality place secondary matters first, and first matters second.

May God help us through the guidance of His Word and the empowering of the Holy Ghost to establish a scriptural order in our lives. We must establish an orderly, scriptural

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sequence of events if we are to be in harmony with divine order. God's Word, the Bible, alone decrees what God's priorities are for us.

Study, apply, and appropriate to yourself these principles of truth. Then and only then will you be pleasing to God. Defining your own priorities is a sure route to defeat and failure. Following God's plan is a sure route to Christian living here, and heaven at the close of life.

In the words of my friend and leader T. F. Tenney, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

Our Savior, Jesus Christ, ranked seeking the kingdom of God as the first priority in our lives. Yet how often do we ignore this gentle, kind, easy flowing statement, pushing it to the back of our mind as a future project! Somehow we need to move from the secondary to the primary priorities that Christ has established.

Unwittingly we are thrust into a *seeking* mode in life. Dividing and subdividing things that people seek would generate an endless list. Oh! The things that vie for our attention and take our time!

Jesus Christ classified what people will seek after and what they should seek after, dividing them into two distinct categories.

A. **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

B. **THE THINGS OF LIFE**

1. Jesus spoke of "all these things" (Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31). For clarity I will refer to the things that Jesus was speaking of as "other things," or "the things of life."
2. "Things of life" refer directly to the items that Jesus had previously mentioned in His discourse (Matthew 6:24-23).

Christ's discourse does not one time indicate or allude that we should abandon our pursuit of life's necessities, or even desires. Jesus did, however, place the seeking of them secondary to seeking the kingdom of God.

Let us note some erroneous ideas and experiments pawned off on the untaught as being Christ's way of seeking His kingdom. Keeping Christ's words in context while maintaining balance is the goal of this lesson.

A. Having all things in common, while experimented with by the early church (Acts 2:44-45), is not a biblical command to present-day believers. Time has proven the fallibility of this system, whether among believers or as a political philosophy.

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B. Separating ourselves from society, denying that we have physical needs and desires, confining ourselves to monasteries or convents, or being a hermit or recluse is in no way equated with putting the kingdom of God first.

C. Asceticism, a practice throughout recorded human history and especially since the time of Christ, is not a scriptural plan for people to live by. Denial of fleshly desires through the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and abstinence is a biblical way of life. Self-imposed worship, false humility, neglecting of the body (Colossians 2:18-23), or other forms of asceticism are not ways of seeking first the kingdom of God.

D. Being dirty, unkempt, ungroomed, lazy, and lacking in industry and self-esteem are not in view here. God made us with a "seeking" nature. Prioritizing our seeking, by putting the kingdom of God first, is what Christ teaches us to do. Laziness, unconcern, allowing others to support us when we are able to work and jobs are available, dressing poorly on purpose, not caring for ourselves or our environment, etc., does not demonstrate that we have put God first.

There first must be a biblical exercise of discipline that God acknowledges and recognizes in us as seekers of His kingdom—first! While this is in no way the last word on the subject, it would do us well to keep the following suggestions in mind:

A. We must consider culture, political systems, governmental restrictions, and poverty-stricken nations here. Some nations are not free or do not have a democratic form of government under which people can choose their own lifestyle. Regardless of the situation nationally, culturally, or individually, there is a realm one can attain where heaven will honor and acknowledge one as having put the kingdom of God first.

B. We should not judge people who have more of life's possessions than we have as putting material things first. Those who may not have the things of this life are not always seekers of God's kingdom. Obviously, we can detect from attitude, service, and consecration those who are intently searching after the things of God. Nevertheless, we should not judge or categorize individuals as being right or wrong solely on what they have or do not have.

C. Seekers of God's kingdom present many examples for us in the Scripture. By patterning our lives after them, we can determine our level and degree of desire and devotion.

1. Queen of Sheba (I Kings 10:1-13; Matthew 12:42). This woman sought out Solomon to hear his wisdom. Will we go to the same, or even greater

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extent, to find Him who is greater (above, more, and more excellent) than Solomon?

2. Disciples (Matthew 19:27). These men forsook all to follow Jesus. Matthew and others even deserted their jobs and occupations to preach Christ's gospel.

3. Paul (Philippians 3:7-8). He counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

The New Testament virtually explodes with both men and women who desired the kingdom of God here and in eternity. Life itself seemed a cheap price for them to pay to gain Christ. Hebrews 11 catalogs men and women of faith from the dawn of human history until the Book of Hebrews was written. They so loved God and sought after Him; no price was too great for them to pay. Oh! What a kingdom to evoke such desire! Can its acquisition become our all-consuming passion and object of desire?

D. It is obvious from Christ's teaching (Matthew 6:24-34) that we could easily become preoccupied with the following:

1. Loving another master besides Him.

2. Having food to eat.

3. Providing something to drink.

4. Being occupied with clothing.

5. Being concerned over our physical stature.

6. Worrying over the future.

Failing to trust God for life's necessities is apparently a lack of faith and characterizes us as being of "little faith."

E. God has an intimate knowledge of what we need, and for us to seek physical needs alone identifies us with the Gentiles (verse 32). "Gentiles" here denotes a condition of the heart (heathen), more than being outside of Jewry. *The New Testament in the Language of Today,* by William F. Beck, translates this phrase: "The people of the world run after all these things." James Moffatt translates it: "Pagans make all that their aim in life." What we intently seek

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identifies us in a marked way as either being a believer in God or, in His eyes, a heathen. Seeking material things first, and making them our primary object of attention, indicates to God that we do not trust him to provide for us, so we will provide it ourselves. What a lack of faith! What a slap in the face of a loving Creator and provider! God save us from such a misguided concept! Materialism, and man's pursuit of it, has become the bane of American society. Since we are inherently seekers of something, Satan has duped so many into turning their energies toward "these things," as Christ characterized them. What we worry about and seek after, God provides for birds, lilies, and grass—even all His creation who put forth no effort toward providing for themselves. What we do seek after, God would supply for us if we will only put His kingdom first.

Nothing in this lesson should be construed as being against having things or even seeking to provide them for ourselves and our families. God's Word condemns laziness and instructs us to provide for our families (I Timothy 5:8; II Thessalonians 3:10). Planning for retirement, saving for emergencies, having goals, etc., is not evil or contrary to Scripture. By the same token, it warns us against trusting in uncertain riches and warns us to lay up a good foundation against the time to come (I Timothy 6:6-19).

God does not normally ask for all our time or for all our money. He does not condemn personal achievement, industry, and advancement. God's Word allows us to achieve, excel, abound, and be stewards of earthly goods. Possessing things does not mean we are displeasing God or out of His will. Having possessions does not make us spiritual; neither should they stop us from being so. God's wish, His will, and His command to us is simply "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). To keep your life in balance and to obey this command, consider the following:

1. Set your affections on things above. Love God and the things of God more than earthly things.

2. Lay up treasures in heaven. This can be done by giving time, money, talents, etc., to God's work.

3. Set aside some of your time to engage in both physical and spiritual causes around your local church.

4. Take time to pray, fast, read your Bible, attend church, as well as be with your family.

5. Respond if God calls you for a special work (ministry, missionary, etc.)

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or gives you talents in needed areas (music, teaching, etc.). By all means make them a priority.

6. Pay your tithes and give offerings; as you prosper, bless God's work and the less fortunate with your bounty.

7. Do not develop a spirit of pride when you have things. Do not think yourself better or above those who may have less than you.

8. Bear in mind that things are temporary items for our use. Soon we will leave them to give account to God of how we used them.

REFLECTIONS

Our entrance into this world was ever so humble: we came with nothing. Our exit from this world returns us to the same lowly position: "It is certain we can carry nothing out" (I Timothy 6:7). (See also Ecclesiastes 5:15-16.) At this juncture, what we have sought "first" will determine our destiny.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 17

FIRST—SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. Webster defines *priority* as_____.
2. Forsaking our _____, our _____, and _____and returning to the Lord was Isaiah's message.
3. Christ classified two categories of things people can and will seek after. What are they? (A)_____. (B) _____.
4. Is having all things in common a practice to observe today? Yes _____No _____.
5. Did the church ever practice this plan? Yes _____ No _____
6. Christians should all live in convents or monasteries. T _____ F_____
7. Hermits put God first since they separate themselves from society. T_____F ____
8. Asceticism is a scriptural word and a term indicative of Christian conduct. T _____F _____
9. Not working or letting your family or the government support you when you are able to work is a way to seek first the kingdom of God. T _____F _____
10. Under any form of government or in any culture, one can still seek first God's kingdom. T_____F_____
11. Are we to judge those in the church who have more than us as being carnal or materially minded? Yes _____ No _____
12. The queen of _____came to hear the wisdom of A. Solomon B. David C. Jesus D. Paul.
13. Name one disciple, from this lesson, who left his occupation to follow Christ. ___ _____.
14. _____counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.
15. Hebrews chapter _____catalogs men and women who lived and died by faith.
16. Name three of the six things we could become preoccupied with, according to Christ's teaching.
    (A) _____, (B) _____, (C)_____.

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17. The word *Gentile* in our lesson denotes a _____.
18. We are to lay up a good _____ against the time to come.
19. Does this lesson condemn personal achievement, self-esteem, advancement, etc? Yes _____ No _____.
20. We came into the world with _____ and we can carry _____out.

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LESSON 18

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SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES PART II

FIRST—BE RECONCILED TO THY BROTHER
MATTHEW 5:21-24

Although this passage precedes our first lesson (Matthew 6:24-34) chronologically, it does not precede it in order of events in our lives. Seeking first the kingdom is a prerequisite to all other pursuits. When we place the kingdom first, we are in a spiritual condition and position to follow God's other commands.

First in each of these lessons indicates the rank, order, precedence, and importance of the matter at hand. In each instance there is a *second*, i.e., something of importance following in the sequence of events. Another responsibility follows when the first order of duties has been carried out. Though subordinate or secondary, the duty or deed is nonetheless of vital importance to our lives.

As God's children we anxiously desire to do all He has commanded us, as well as doing it in the order He desires it done. One of David's major mistakes was in trying to move the ark of the covenant without following God's due order (I Chronicles 15:13). As a result, Uzza died. The project was delayed until God's method and procedure was searched out and executed accordingly. Some things may strike or impress us as demanding first place when in the plan of God they rank second. Following our intuition is always a mistake when God's Word is clear on the subject.

Before us is just such a scenario. What could be more important and necessary than sacrificing to God? Our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, provides us with divine insight into something that ranks even above sacrifice.

A. Jesus contrasted the old covenant command not to kill with His new edict concerning our brother. The law taught people not to kill (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17), but Jesus went much further.

B. Jesus established a portion of the new covenant in contradistinction to the old with these words: "But I say unto you . . ." (Matthew 5:22). Proceeding from God manifested in the flesh came a new and profound way to treat our brother. Let us note Jesus' teaching.

   1. Being angry with our brother without cause, places us in danger of the judgment. Scripture tells us to put away all anger, but the Lord indicated

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that unjustified anger is a more serious matter than justifiable anger.

2. "Brother" in this text extends beyond bloodlines and familial ties to the fraternal brotherhood of the entire body of Christ. Calling someone "raca" endangered people in Christ's day with the Jewish religious council, or Sanhedrin, denoting the seriousness of the matter.

   "Raca" comes from the Greek word *rhaka* (rhak-ah'), meaning empty one, worthless, as a term of utter vilification. According to W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, it is a word of utter contempt, signifying emptiness, intellectually rather than morally.

   By citing the use of this word, Jesus indicated that someone's attitude and speech is worse than merely being angry. Anger is often unexpressed, while "raca" expresses ill feelings and attitudes toward another.

3. Saying to our brother "thou fool" places us in danger of hellfire. In this context Jesus referred to the place of everlasting punishment. "Fool" here is even worse than "raca," meaning one who is a godless, moral reprobate. "Fool" here comes from the Greek word *moros* (mo-ros'), meaning dull or stupid, heedless, blockhead, and absurd. According to W. E. Vine, *rhaka* scorns a man's mind while *moros* scorns his heart and character.

Without question, Jesus Christ established a higher level of fellowship and association than previously required by the Old Testament. Killing our brother is irrefutably a sin in any age. Under our age of grace, Christ laid greater demands upon His church beyond refraining from physical murder. Calling our brother a fool violates the principles of Christianity and endangers our own soul.

Resolving and eliminating this problem becomes the focus of Christ's extended teaching on the matter. He provided for us a proper sequence of events should we have hidden or expressed problems with our brother. Christ told us what to do *first*, before we go any further in our Christian responsibilities and rites.

Let us study the picture Christ portrayed for us in Matthew 5:23-24. A man brings his sacrifice to the altar. (This extends far beyond an animal sacrifice and speaks of born again believers offering themselves and their other gifts to God.) Upon approaching God, the man remembers that a brother has something against him. What is he to do at this juncture? Here Jesus established a biblical order and direction for our lives. As strange as it may seem and sound, He told us to leave the gift—literally leave off sacrificing at this time—until we settle a matter of greater importance than sacrificing. What could that be?

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A. "**First,** be reconciled to thy brother." We note here that the brother who is not present has "ought" (anything whatsoever) against the brother who is presenting the gift to God. Upon remembering the brother's feelings, the offerer is to leave his gift, go, and first be reconciled to his brother.

"Reconciled" here comes from the Greek work *diallasso* (dee-al-las'-so), meaning to change thoroughly, to conciliate. Something occurs in this confrontation that changes the existing enmity to friendship.

Surprisingly, to religious, sacrificing, Christian people, Christ made offering our gift to Him *secondary to relationships*. How vital our association and fellowship with our brethren must be to God for Him to give such directives!

The path to reconciliation involves:

1. Facing the problem. God's Spirit will smite and convict us when there are unsettled differences between us and our brother. Being mature enough to face the matter within itself usually brings peace.

2. Being willing to admit there is a problem. We must get it out in the open and quit ignoring deep-seated, long-held resentments.

3. Showing true Christian humility. Humility usually precedes our going but must be manifested throughout the reconciliation process.

4. Having a repentant spirit, which is essential in any effort of reconciliation.

5. Seeking forgiveness on our part and our brother's part. This must take place both now and in the future.

Reconciliation is a powerful New Testament doctrine and in this context it arises to new proportions, making demands on all our lives where interpersonal relationships are concerned.

Tremendous import is placed upon brotherhood, not only in this text but throughout the Bible. Broken relationships and fellowship are serious matters in the eyes of God and can have eternal consequences in our lives:

1. Medical science has proven, beyond question, the stressful impact that broken relationships have upon people. Of course they also produce severe spiritual conditions.

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2. Bitterness, hatred, and backsliding are evident where irreconcilable differences exist.

3. Hatred toward our brother places us in the role of a murderer in the eyes of God (I John 2:9-11; 3:14-15; 4:20-21).

4. Cain apparently could have corrected his mistaken order of sacrifice had he so desired (Genesis 4:6-7). Instead he allowed an offense, hatred, to arise in his heart, resulting in the murder of his brother. (See I John 3:11-18).

5. Esau's deep, seething anger toward Jacob developed into hatred until his descendants were eradicated from the earth. Jacob offered the olive branch of reconciliation, but apparently Esau could not find it in his heart to forgive completely, for there was ongoing strife between their descendants. Obadiah devoted his message of 21 verses to Esau's descendants. Impending doom and destruction awaited them simply because they failed to be reconciled to their brethren.

6. Joseph, a type of Christ, is the epitome of a true child of God. His fame was distinctly related to his forgiving spirit toward his brethren (Genesis 50:15-20).

7. Christ told us how to handle trespasses between brethren (Luke 17:3-4). He taught us how to practice forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35.

Good relationships are essential to our mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Proper relationships between brethren are more important than offering gifts before the altar of God. If our Lord feels this strongly about the matter, should not the church adopt His views and practice them?

B. Second, we should offer our gift at the altar to God. Remember, we came to do this first, but God said something else was more important. Therefore we arose, left our gift, and became reconciled to our brother. Now we bring the sacrifice of ourselves and our praise to God (Romans 12:1-2).

Could it be that God will not accept us, our worship, talents, singing, or money if we are at odds with our brother or sister in Christ? Let us put first things first, and then the smallest gift will be acceptable to God.

REFLECTIONS

Relationships and sacrifice are both important and essential for a Christian. Obeying I John 1:7 provides the impetus and motivation we need. When we fail and offenses, trespasses, and misunderstandings arise, let us follow Jesus' command—"first be reconciled to thy brother"!

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 18

FIRST—BE RECONCILED TO THY BROTHER

1. *First* in these lessons indicates _____, _____, and _____.
2. David did not follow God's " _____ " when moving the ark of the covenant.
3. The old covenant taught Israel not to _____.
4. Being angry with our brother without cause places us in danger of the _____.
5. *Brother* in our lesson refers to a male member of our family. T _____ F _____.
6. To call someone *raca* endangered Jews with the _____.
7. *Raca* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
8. Saying to our brother "thou fool" places us in danger of _____.
9. *Fool* in this passage of Scripture comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
10. Upon bringing our gift to the altar and remembering our brother has "ought" against us, what are we to do? _____.
11. *Reconciled* means _____.
12. Christ made offering a gift to Him _____to relationships.
13. Give three steps to take on the path to reconciliation.
    (A) _____, (B) _____
    (C)_____.
14. Broken relationships, according to medical science, can have adverse affects upon us. T _____ F_____
15. Hatred of our brother places us in the role of a _____.
16. Jacob's brother, _____, allowed hatred to destroy him and his descendants.
17. Joseph is a type of Christ. T_____ F _____
18. Good relationships are essential to our _____, _____, and _____ well-being.
19. First we are reconciled to our brother; second we offer _____.
20. Could it be that God will not accept our offering of anything if things are not right between us and our brethren? Yes _____ No _____.

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LESSON 19

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SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES
PART III

FIRST—CAST OUT THE BEAM OUT OF THINE OWN EYE
MATTHEW 7:1-5

Making our actions a priority, upon facing a decision in our life, is the goal of these studies. Doing this always creates a conflict between flesh and Spirit, since these are contrary forces working within each Christian (Galatians 5:17). While we earnestly desire to carry out the commands of God in the order He has laid down for us, performing them becomes a daily battle.

In our Scripture text Jesus presented us with two important needs: removing the mote from a brother's eye and removing the beam from our own eye. Where should we start? Obviously we have discovered a mote in a fellow Christian's eye, and for his sake we feel an urgency to step in and pluck it from his partially blinded eye. Jesus Christ also recognized the need for removing motes; however, immediately He established a biblical principle of precedence. Before we remove the mote, the larger object called a beam, which blocks the vision of the one discerning the problem, needs removing—*first!*

Personal introspection lies at the heart of Jesus' teaching in this passage. How we all need a look into the mirror of God's Word to see ourselves as God sees us (James 1:21-25)! Upon examining ourselves with the Scripture, the illumination of God's Word enables us to see personal faults and flaws needing to be dealt with. Let us examine Christ's teaching in context on this vital matter.

A. "**JUDGE NOT THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED**."

This oft-quoted verse is used out of context as much as any in the Bible. It is referred to quickly when we pronounce someone as evil, even when the Bible is clear on the matter. Vehemently we will be told how we are not to judge anything or anyone as wrong or evil. None of us want to sit in the judgment seat, yet God allows and expects people to render judgment in certain areas according to His Word.

- **Judge**—in this context comes from the Greek word *krino*, meaning to distinguish, decide (mentally or judicially), try, condemn, punish, avenge, conclude, damn, decree, determine, and esteem.

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It is evident that Christ was telling us not to condemn, punish, or damn our brethren unjustifiably. It is also evident that He did not restrict or deny the scriptural responsibility of making godly, biblical, decisions as dictated in His Word. Rather, He instructed us in Matthew 7:1-5 not to condemn our brother over a matter when an even greater matter plagues us. If we do so, the same harsh condemnation or judgment that we issue forth on others will return to us (Romans 2:1-3).

As a subject, *judging* is an extensive biblical doctrine deserving study and investigation. While judging is not the subject at hand, due to its implication in this study, I ask you to consider these biblical guidelines.

B. SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES RELATIVE TO JUDGING

By no means is this the last word on the subject, neither is it a complete commentary nor exposition on judging. I simply present these guidelines as a foundation upon which you can build.

1. We are not to judge anything before the proper time (I Corinthians 4:5).

2. We are not to take our brethren to civil court over matters that should be settled within the church (I Corinthians 6:1-8).

3. We are not to judge according to how things appear; we are to use righteous judgment (John 7:24).

4. We do have judgment in things pertaining to this life (I Corinthians 6:4).

5. We, as a church, are to judge those who are within (saints); God judges those who are without (sinners) (I Corinthians 5:12).

6. We are inexcusable when we judge (condemn) others for things that we do ourselves (Roman 2:1-3).

7. We will judge the world and angels (I Corinthians 6:2-3).

8. We make ourselves a judge of our brethren and the law, thus violating the law, when we speak evil of our brethren (James 4:11).

Paul judged cases within the church when members violated God's Word (I Corinthians 5:3). Jesus gives the church authority to sit in judgment (Matthew 18:15-18). He told us to use righteous judgment in matters that we do judge (John 7:24). Measures of judgment are given relative to spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 14:29). Paul also issued a judg-

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ment, or decision, regarding marriage under certain circumstances (I Corinthians 7:25, 40).

Keeping Scripture in context, defining words, and applying them properly are essential to keeping truth and holiness in balance and harmony.

C. CASTING OUT MOTES

Jesus set forth guidelines and restrictions for all of us in Matthew 7:1-5 and Luke 6:41-42 when it comes to casting motes out of our brother's eye.

- **Mote**—comes from the Greek word *karphos,* meaning a small, dry stalk, a twig, a bit of dried stick, or a tiny straw or bit of wood, such as might fly into the eye; it is used metaphorically of a minor fault.

The scenario before us is: someone has a beam or a timber in his eye, sees a mote in his brother's eye, and feels a God-given responsibility to remove it. Now we all agree that the mote should be removed; however, the brother should remove the beam from his own eye first. "Then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye" (Luke 6:42). A beam would naturally impair one's vision to the extent that he might damage his brother while working under such conditions. This is somewhat like going to a nearly blind eye specialist and asking him to remove a piece of sawdust from your eye.

Jesus did not justify minor, insignificant flaws in the life of a saint; rather, he set a priority on removing beams first. Issuing harsh judgment upon those who are much less at fault than ourselves only brings a more severe judgment upon our own life (Matthew 7:1-2). Let us consider the following biblical principles:

1. All of us should lay aside every weight and sin that besets us (Hebrews 12:1).

2. We are not to offend or destroy others over even the smallest things (Romans 14:1-23).

3. It takes only a *little* folly to destroy a reputation (Ecclesiastes 10:1).

4. Little foxes do spoil the vine (Song of Solomon 2:15).

5. A small amount of leaven can leaven the whole (I Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9).

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6. A little fire can kindle a great matter; our tongue, a little member of the body, can kindle such a fire (James 3:5).

Small things do need attention; however, it is foolish to major on a minor while ignoring large, destructive elements in our lives. After the beams have been removed, then we can pursue the motes. May I remind you, though, how even the smallest of things (motes) can grow and become overpowering sins in our lives. In studying the seed that fell among thorns, we see this principle in action. Slowly the small thorns grew until they choked out life (Matthew 13:7, 22). So will it be with us if we ignore seemingly insignificant wrongs or evils.

D. **CASTING OUT BEAMS**

Jesus emphasized procedure, precedence, or order of events where motes and beams exist in the eyes of believers. First—the beam is to be cast out.

Our human tendency often is to major on minors and minor on majors. We go at the task backwards rather than according to the Scripture. We often place the secondary, first—and the first, second—in our procedure. When we do this we approach our brother in a weakened, marred, and impaired condition. Then due to limited vision, because of the beam in our eye, we offend or do irreparable harm to our brother (Luke 6:42).

- **Beam—**comes from the Greek work *dokos,* meaning a stick of timber (through the idea of holding up).

Actually, Jesus used a literal object when He used the word *beam*. It is a large piece of timber capable of bearing a load or holding up a building.

Before we hastily approach another over some minor infraction, we should carefully examine ourselves lest something more obvious and offending exist in us. To help those who struggle with small things we must have conquered obvious sins in our lives. Put first things first! And the first thing to do is remove the beam from your own eye.

1. Some strain out gnats yet swallow a camel (Matthew 23:24).

2. The Pharisee could quickly see the tax collector's error, while overlooking grievous sins in his own life (Luke 18:9-14).

3. Corinth overlooked moral corruption in the church, while occupied with other matters (I Corinthians 5:1-13).

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4. The Pharisees were deeply concerned over washing their hands and their utensils, while ignoring sins that defiled them within (Mark 7:1-13; Matthew 23:1-28).

Following biblical directives and principles will assure all of us victory over both small and great matters.

E. **IMPAIRED SPIRITUAL VISION**

Perhaps the things God has pointed out in His Word that causes weakened eyesight or spiritual blindness could constitute or make up some of the beams Jesus spoke about. If so, getting rid of or remedying these problems would restore our spiritual vision. Restored or corrected eyesight would then enable us to walk without stumbling, as well as help our brother to eradicate motes from His eyes. Let us note some of the hindrances to spiritual perception:

1. Being lukewarm can definitely cause us to be spiritually blind (Revelation 3:14-22).

2. Hating our brother causes us to be in darkness, that darkness blinds our eyes, and we are a murderer (I John 1:6; 2:9-11; 3:15).

3. Failing to add to our faith the seven things that God requires can cause spiritual blindness (II Peter 1:5-10).

4. Allowing our eye to be evil or any portion of darkness to exist in our lives will cause us to be full of darkness (Matthew 6:22-23; Luke 11:34-36).

REFLECTIONS

We could rightfully designate numerous items and objects as beams. You know better than others what major infractions plague your life. For your sake, God's, and your brethren, *first* cast the beam out of your own eye. Then, and only then, can you help your brother remove the mote from his eye.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 19

FIRST—CAST OUT THE BEAM OUT OF THINE OWN EYE

1. *Judge* in our lesson comes from the Greek word _____, meaning to _____.
2. List three scriptural guidelines relative to judging.
   (A) _____
   (B) _____
   (C) _____
3. Are we to take our brethren to civil court over matters that should be settled by the church? Yes _____ No _____.
4. We, as a church, are to judge those who are _____; God judges those who are _____.
5. *Mote*, in the Bible, means _____.
6. A person who has a beam in his eye should do what? _____
7. After a beam has been removed from one's eye, Jesus said he could then see " _____" to pull the mote out of his brother's eye.
8. Did Jesus justify the existence of motes in our eyes? Yes _____ No _____.
9. All of us are to lay aside every _____and sin that besets us.
10. *Beam* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning to _____.
11. Regardless of what is wrong in our lives, when we see error in others we should immediately seek to correct them. T _____ F _____
12. Beams, according to our text, definitely impair our vision. T _____ F_____
13. Some strain out _____ and swallow a _____.
14. In prayer the Pharisee quickly saw the _____ errors.
15. The Corinthian church ignored moral failure among them. T _____F _____.
16. Being lukewarm causes us to be spiritually _____.
17. Hating our brother makes us a _____.
18. We are to add to our faith _____(number) things in order to avoid spiritual blindness.
19. Allowing our eye to be evil will produce darkness in us. T _____ F_____

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20. Where motes and beams are concerned, we should take these steps in the following order.
    (A) First: _____
    (B) Second: _____

LESSON 20

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SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES
PART IV

FIRST—THEY GAVE THEIR OWN SELVES TO THE LORD
II CORINTHIANS 8:1-9

Being the fourth lesson of this series is not an indication that giving ourselves to God is a fourth step in Christian living. This lesson is closely aligned to our first study in which the Lord enjoins us to seek *first* the kingdom of God. Any person who seeks God first will of necessity give himself to God. However, after this initial step of putting God's kingdom first, we automatically face the ongoing challenge of keeping ourselves dedicated to God.

Involvement in personal pursuits, along with the availability of means and methods to do so, produces an environment conducive to our being lukewarm. In such setting it becomes easy for us to give of our means rather than of ourselves. As we identify scriptural priorities, it becomes evident that God wants people first, their means (resources, property, riches, etc.) second.

Causes, even God's, can be so projected until people will support them without ever being committed to them. While some projects only require support without involvement, this is not true of God's kingdom. Personal involvement and surrender to God is a priority, established by the Scripture, that by far exceeds one's gifts. Contributions and even spiritual gifts offered and exercised without a deep love and loyalty to God and His cause have the emptiness of sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (I Corinthians 13:1-3). While gifts of time, talent, and money are needed and beneficial, God's ultimate and highest expectation is that we simply give ourselves—*first*.

Resources, wealth, and power are all at God's disposal (Psalm 50:7-12). God exercises the right of eminent domain over all His creation except humanity. God's kingdom has need of consecrated men and women who have first given themselves to God. He then will supply all our needs when we supply His kingdom with ourselves (Philippians 4:19). God can give humans anything, but only humans can give themselves to God. He never forces or demands personal, individual loyalty; He only requests it. Is this sufficient motivation for you to give yourself to Him?

A. **THE MACEDONIAN EXAMPLE**

In a vision God directed Paul, during his second missionary journey, to go to the province of Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10). Upon his arrival, in due time he

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established churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He made many converts in these cities who immediately dedicated themselves to God. Paul and his helpers also evangelized Achaia, a neighboring province, with great success. From these and other parts of the then-known world, great Christians arose who not only gave themselves to God but also gave of their meager means. In writing his epistles, Paul set forth these saints as examples to others. Their deeds definitely establish an example for the church today.

1. Paul in his second epistle to Corinth (a city in Achaia), set forth the Macedonia brethren as an example to them in personal devotion. In this passage (II Corinthians 8) he showed how that, even in deep poverty, they gave of their meager means to the work of God. He emphasized an overlooked element that produced such willing sacrifice: "They . . . first gave their own selves to the Lord" (II Corinthians 8:5).

   Interestingly enough, Paul had also used the Achaian churches, of which Corinth was a part, as an example to the Macedonian churches to provoke them to zeal (II Corinthians 9:1-15). It is therefore evident from Paul's letters that the early church was totally surrendered, both men and means to the cause of Christ.

2. After completely giving themselves to God, the Macedonian saints dedicated their meager means to helping other, less fortunate saints and ministers.

   a. The churches of Macedonia, joined by those of Achaia, made a contribution to the poor saints in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-28).

   b. The church at Philippi, a city in Macedonia, sent help to Paul even after he had left their city (Philippians 4:13-23). These verses contain an expression of appreciation from Paul for their assistance. Paul was aware that only dedicated people would give to him when they were in need themselves (Philippians 4:19).

3. Epaphroditus, who was apparently a resident of Philippi in Macedonia, was a dedicated servant to the kingdom of God. His devotion ran so deep until Paul wrote to his home church that "for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death" (Philippians 2:30). What a Christian! Not only did he give of his means, along with that of the Philippian church, but he first gave himself. Study his story in Philippians 2:24-30; 4:15-23.

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B. CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

In citing the Macedonian brethren to the Corinthians as an example of self-sacrifice, Paul injected this powerful example:

> "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9).

This verse does not merely describe someone giving all his substance but an actual emptying of self. Christ gave Himself for us that we might be rich—not in money or material things but in spiritual wealth. The Bible repeatedly expresses this truth: Christ gave Himself for us (Galatians 1:4; I Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14). The greatest offering given and the highest contribution made is that of oneself. Christ set forth this principle and example in His death at Calvary.

C. GOD'S LAW OF FIRSTS

Even in the Old Testament under the first covenant, God established His principle of priorities. By giving instructions to Israel, He set forth what He considers to be vital and foremost in His work. God has always established His requirements and expectations for His people, even in the Book of Genesis. At the deliverance of Israel, whom He set forth as His chosen people, God established an order of dedication that remains in effect to this present time. First, He wants the individual and then a willing presentation of each individual's means.

1. After God had slain the firstborn of Egypt, He set Israel free and established the Passover feast among them. As soon as Israel set forth on their journey, God sanctified (set apart, separated, made holy) to Himself the firstborn of Israel (Exodus 13:1-16). Any casual student of the Word knows that Israel was supposed to adhere to this law throughout the Old Testament.

   Today, under grace, we are "a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). God's people, the church, those who are born again, are in His sight the "firstborn." They are to be set apart unto Him solely, entirely, and completely. No longer are we our own; we have been bought with a price (I Corinthians 6:19-20). We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ (I Peter 1:18-19).

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2. After Israel had given themselves and their firstborn to God, He wanted them to willingly offer the firstfruits of their labors to Him (Exodus 23:16-19; 34:26; Leviticus 2:12, 14; 23:10). This was to be a life-long consecration for each Israelite. Even the offerings from their flocks were to be of the firstborn. Simply put, God wanted what was first in every aspect of their lives—themselves, then their substance.

   The church today should take note of God's requirement of man, coupled with an all-encompassing promise that endures to all generations:

   > "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Firstborn then firstfruits, the man then the means, the servant then the service is God's established priority for His people. God's call, and my challenge to you, is to give yourself to Him first.

D. SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES AND ADMONITIONS

Born-again Christians who withhold tithes and offerings from the church fall into the dubious position that Israel did: they rob God (Malachi 3:8-12). Those who refuse to use their talents will stand in judgment condemned to outer darkness (Matthew 25:14-30). Those who love wealth, possessions, and things more than they love God face eternal separation from Him (Luke 12:15-21; 16:19-31; 18:18-27). The evidence is in: God wants and expects of us a dedication of time, talent, money, and service. His kingdom depends upon our substance for its propagation and continuity. Withholding our means only brings the curse of God upon us. Never should we develop a stingy, selfish, cheap, tightfisted, spirit toward the work of God. God has given so much to us; how can we withhold our substance from Him? When we begin to feel self-sufficient and self-made, thinking we have the privilege of withholding our substance, we should ask ourselves this scriptural question: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Corinthians 4:7). In conjunction with this read Deuteronomy 8:1-20.

Nevertheless, this fact remains, *first* we must give ourselves to the Lord. Too many professing saints want to live sloven, prayerless, undedicated lives and compensate for their lukewarmness with large contributions to the church. While the money is a blessing, the principle is wrong and will be the cause of

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their being lost. Substitution of money and talent for consecration is the curse and bane of the church today. As sure as day follows night, a person who gives himself will give of his means, but, sad to say, many give of their means but never surrender themselves.

The problem with the rich young ruler was not the amount of money he had; it was his lack of dedication (Luke 18:18-27). Peter, witnessing this scene, received a lesson from Jesus Christ in Luke 18:28-30. Those who leave all, who give of themselves, receive both here and hereafter. People who stumble over paying tithes or giving offerings on their checks and inheritance do not have a problem with money; they have a problem with themselves. Ananias and Sapphira had this problem.

In our American culture where affluence abounds, especially since World War II, we are witnessing a sad, unscriptural, morally corrupting practice. Because of abundance, people are giving of their means without any noticeable discomfort or sacrifice, while they themselves abandon the work of God. Many local churches and some denominations drown in a surplus of money and donations while sitting nearly empty on church nights. Church work (literal, actual tasks) that once drew men and women with enthusiasm now go begging for lack of manpower. Hands and hearts once dedicated to God now languish in worldly pleasures pacified by a generous donation to the cause. “Let someone else make the sacrifice, sweat, and toil—I will give my means but not myself” is their attitude. May God stir and smite us in our soul until we return to a personal, all-out dedication of ourselves to God!

We must never forget that our money cannot praise God. Wealth cannot sing songs of worship or witness to a lost soul. Gifts can help a missionary, but they cannot be a missionary—only men and women can fill such lofty roles. Gold and silver have never driven one nail, sawed one board, painted one church, or preached one sermon. People alone have such distinction and honor. How foolish to curse ourselves and miss out on one of life’s greatest areas of fulfillment, satisfaction, achievement, and reward by simply being uninvolved! I call you to renewal, a sacrifice of yourself, a restoration of faithfulness to the house of God, a revival of a lost prayer life, and a recommitment to worship, altar work, and the choir, along with physical involvement in church work.

Let us consider the following scriptural examples as a guideline for the restoration of scriptural priorities in our lives:

1. One of the earliest examples of a man confusing God’s priorities is found in Genesis 4:1-16. Cain disobeyed God in the kind of sacrifice he

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presented. However, the problem goes deeper in that "unto Cain . . . he had not respect" (Genesis 4:5). Admittedly, the offering was not what God wanted, but the root of the problem was with Cain himself. God's principle works; when the person is right (he gives himself first), the offering that follows will also be right and sufficient.

2. Saul violated God's command regarding the Amalekites, falling back on the premise that God would overlook his rebellion and stubbornness if he saved and gave a big offering or sacrifice to God (I Samuel 15:6-23). He was wrong. Substance alone is not sufficient; the offerer must have first offered himself before he offers his gift.

3. Presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice is God's first priority for us (Romans 12:1-2). Only yielded people can offer yielded gifts. Gifts from unyielded people are not acceptable to God. The acceptability of our gift is directly related to the submission of ourselves.

4. Submitting ourselves to God—*first*—is the prerequisite for victory over the devil (James 4:7). Unsubmitted lives are open to satanic control, or at least oppression and depression by him. Submission to God within itself is the only spiritually enabling element by which we can successfully resist the devil. Resisting Satan from any other premise has no effect whatsoever on him.

5. Stephanas, one of the few converts whom Paul baptized (I Corinthians 1:16), along with his house, "addicted," or devoted, themselves to the ministry of the saints (I Corinthians 16:15-18). This man and his family in the province of Achaia were converted under the ministry of Paul. They became so dedicated to helping others until Paul said they were "addicted." Apparently devotion to God can be a spiritually addictive element in one's life. Replicating this in our lives should be our goal.

6. I like to think of Romans 16:1-27 as a greeting card or chapter to those who first gave themselves to the Lord. Close scrutiny of this chapter reveals not those who gave great gifts, but those who gave themselves. Allow these great men and women to inspire you to true nobility and self-dedication to God.

REFLECTIONS

First our names must be written in heaven and kept there by a life of faithfulness and dedication. Heaven's record of our treasure sent there will be unquestionably accurate. However, gifts without the giver first being given will have no head upon which to bestow their crown. Yours without you is an empty vessel, a crown with no one to wear it, a scepter without a hand to hold it, a throne with no king to sit upon it. What a loss—a reward but no one to receive it!

On the other hand, the one who has so little to send ahead but gives himself totally to God will find that he has built upon the foundation with gold, sliver, and precious stones. God's search is an old, established one—he looks for a person. He never looks at our means as a reason to save or reject us. Those who come to Him, He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37). A poor widow with a mite holds the attention of God because of her dedication, not the size of her gift (Mark 12:41-43).

You are so important to God. Why not surrender yourself to Him as you are right now? If God can have you, He has yours. First you must give yourself!

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 20

FIRST—THEY GAVE THEIR OWN SELVES TO THE LORD

1. Is it possible to support a cause with our substance without being committed to it? Yes _____ No_____
2. Contributions and gifts without love are as sounding _____ or a tinkling _____.
3. In a vision God directed Paul on his second missionary journey to go to _____.
4. The Macedonia saints were rich in possessions. T_____F_____
5. Paul used the _____ churches, of which Corinth was a part, as an example to the Macedonian churches.
6. Macedonia and Achaia made a contribution to the poor saints in _____.
7. The church at _____ sent Paul help even after he had left their city.
8. What man from Philippi was near death for the work of Christ? _____.
9. Memorize II Corinthians 8:5 word for word. Did you do this? Yes _____ No _____
10. God sanctified to Himself the _____ of Israel.
11. Under grace we are a kind of _____ of His creatures.
12. The offerings from Israel's flocks was to be of the _____.
13. We are to honor the Lord with our _____ and the firstfruits of our _____.
14. In the first recorded offering of sacrifice in Genesis, which man disobeyed? ____.
15. First we are to present to God our (circle one): (A) bodies, (B) money, (C) time, (D) talent, (E) singing.
16. _____ourselves to God first is the prerequisite for victory over the devil.
17. One of the few converts Paul baptized was _____.
18. Stephanas and his family had _____ themselves to helping others.
19. God's search is an old, established one—He looks for a _____.
20. It was a _____ who cast a mite in the treasury of the Temple that Jesus recognized as giving of her living.

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LESSON 21

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SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES
PART V

FIRST—CLEANSE THAT WHICH IS WITHIN
MATTHEW 23:25-28

This passage of Scripture appears in one of Jesus' sermons to His disciples and the multitude following Him. Apparently a number of scribes and Pharisees were mingling in the multitude, since most of Jesus' remarks were directed to them. Admittedly you and I are not scribes and Pharisees; however, we can apply His message to our lives in a constructive way. This is especially true if we are guilty of the evils that they committed and that Jesus so forcefully renounced.

Another biblical priority is set forth here for those who seek to please their Lord. Inward purity lies at the heart of Matthew 23; from it we can find important guidelines for our own Christian conduct and character.

We cannot cover every evil committed by this group, but the entire chapter does deserve our personal attention and investigation. It was not the profession (being a scribe) or the religious sect (being a Pharisee) that Jesus condemned; rather, it was their conduct, attitude, and lifestyle.

Christ focused on the conduct and spirit of the scribes and Pharisees, calling them hypocrites (Matthew 23:13). Their teachings were not evil or bad; in fact, Jesus encouraged His listeners to observe and do as they taught. In the same breath, however, He told His followers not to do the works of these people because they said right things but did not do them (Matthew 23:3). Such conduct in them or us produces hypocrisy—something strictly forbidden by the Word of God.

One thing the scribes and Pharisees had done to perfection, and for which they were not condemned, was having their outward, physical appearance right. However, God wanted them, and us, to *first* cleanse that which was within. Outward appearance is important to God, but it becomes acceptable to Him only when accompanied by inward purity and holiness. Right living, holiness, godly attitudes, appearance, Christian dress, and so on, must stem from an internal experience and conviction. Otherwise it is a mere display of discipline on the part of the individual. Such codes of conduct are not accepted as holiness unto the Lord. Holiness and godliness must emanate from within and be exhibited outwardly in dress, speech, attitude, and conduct.

"First" in our text comes from the Greek word *proton* (pro'-ton), meaning first in time, place, order, or importance, before, at the beginning, chief, or first of all. These people

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had cleansed the outside of the cup and platter (physical appearance or body) but within were full of extortion and excess. Jesus further likened their lives to whitened sepulchers that were full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. While not condemning their outward attributes, Christ established a priority for them and future followers of His—*first* cleanse that which is within!

Outward symbols that portray someone as a Christian are negated if he lacks an inward experience and conviction. By mere personal discipline or some code or regulation, anyone can adhere to certain dress codes or rules of conduct. While this is admirable and commendable in anyone, Bible holiness stems from within and manifests itself in a commensurate lifestyle. The difference is that one is motivated by human discipline and rules, the other by the Word and Spirit. God recognizes only the life ordered according to His Word and by the Holy Ghost within the believer.

Let us begin the cleansing process where God wants it to begin on the inside. Those who begin there, allowing God to control the inward person, will soon adhere outwardly to biblical teachings set forth by the church. In no way am I suggesting that we abandon rules and standards of conduct for church members. These must be! Yet the adherents must be motivated to abide by them because of an inward experience with God.

Not by any stretch of the imagination would I even hint for us to adopt worldly, ungodly dress and lifestyles. God forbid that we apostolic Christians would ever take on the appearance of the world that God saved us from. The church must preserve outward holiness and standards of conduct at all costs. I merely advocate what Jesus taught: cleanse the inside first, then the outside. If the outward appearance is correct, but evil has crept into your heart, purge it at once and restore your inward purity before God. Both inward and outward purity, kept in balance simultaneously, must be the condition of true Christians.

Although each of us is one person, entity, or unit, God describes us as having two major parts. Both are to be pure and clean if we are to please God and go to heaven.

A. **INWARD MAN**

Humans are composed of body, soul, and spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23). Our soul and spirit are closely connected, so close until often only God's Word can separate them (Hebrews 4:12). Therefore, throughout this lesson, we will use soul and spirit in combined form to designate the inward person.

God is far more interested in our soul than our flesh. Christ's suffering through the stripes laid upon His back has provided healing for our bodies (I Peter 2:24), yet Calvary was primarily for the salvation of the soul.

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Somehow the Pharisees and scribes had confused God's priority and placed emphasis on the outside rather than the inside. When Christ came, He set things in perspective by explaining where true cleansing originates.

When we are born again of the water and Spirit, in God's eyes we are cleansed within (John 3:1-8). From this day forward an ongoing work of the Word and Spirit operates in the life of every believer. Remaining pure within, developing outward Christian graces, and growing into maturity becomes our goal.

Christians should make it their priority to cleanse and purify the inward person. Due to the extensiveness of this topic, each student or teacher is encouraged to do personal research and add to this lesson.

1. Jesus compared the inward man to a cup. He later compared the internal part to a sepulcher (Matthew 23:25-28).

2. Paul drew a parallel between the perishing outward man and the inward man, which is renewed day by day (II Corinthians 4:16). For an in-depth examination, see II Corinthians 4:16 through II Corinthians 5:10.

3. We are to be strengthened with might by the Spirit in the *inner* man (Ephesians 3:14-21).

4. Saints are to delight in the law of God after the inward man (Romans 7:22).

5. God sets forth a scriptural principle regarding those who are Jews inwardly rather than outwardly (Romans 2:28-29). He did not do away with the Jewish nation, but He established the Israel of God (Galatians 6:15-16). This is accomplished by a circumcision not made with hands (Colossians 2:10-12).

6. Inward corruption, the ravening wolf, and the false prophet can be clothed in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15-20). However, since our true inward identity will be exposed by our fruit, it is impossible for us to conceal forever what is within.

7. Paul contrasted the "old man" and the "new man" (Ephesians 4:22-32; Colossians 3:8-17). Shedding the "old man" requires cleansing from within. Note the inseparable union between inward and outward conduct. Putting on the new man, or cleaning what is within, always affects the outward man.

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As we seek to cleanse "first" that which is within, it is important to note the things that God's Word teaches us to put off as well as to put on. It is not enough just to do away with some things; we must establish within and appropriate unto ourselves scriptural virtues. In doing so, we become pure in the eyes of God.

THINGS TO PUT OFF

a. Malice
b. Guile
c. Hypocrisy
d. Envy
e. Evil Speakings
f. Old Man
g. Lying
h. Bitterness
i. Wrath
j. Anger
k. Clamor
l. Blasphemy

I encourage you to look up definitions for each of these words. Scripture references are I Peter 2:1; Colossians 3:8-9; Ephesians 4:22-31.

THINGS TO PUT ON

a. Armor of Light
b. Lord Jesus Christ
c. Whole Armor of God
d. Humbleness of Mind
e. Meekness
f. Forbearance
g. New Man
h. Bowels of Mercies
i. Kindness
j. Forgiveness
k. Longsuffering
l. Charity

Again I encourage you to search out definitions for each topic. Scripture references are Romans 13:12-14; Ephesians 6:11-18; Colossians 3:10-14; Ephesians 4:22-32.

As we eliminate defiling influences in our lives, we establish the new person and effect an internal cleansing.

Only God can cleanse us within; this is accomplished through salvation from sin, at which time we are washed in His blood (Revelation 1:5; I Peter 1:18-19; Acts 20:28). From that day forward we must put forth every effort to retain that purity, lest Satan defile us again (Galatians 4:9; 5:1; II Peter 2:20-22).

We need to guard with care some important areas of our inward life, lest they become filthy and defiled as the scribes and Pharisees were. Below are some of the areas that Jesus instructs us to give care to *first*.

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1. Heart
   The heart here is not the muscular organ pumping blood to our bodies. It is the rest of emotions, the fountainhead from which flows the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). Defilement occurs when we allow our hearts to be filled with the evils that Jesus warned against (Mark 7:20-23; Matthew 15:18-20).

2. Mind
   Satan cannot control our minds, but he does have access to them. Through an ongoing purging of our minds, we can keep this hidden area of our lives pure before God. An old adage says, "The road your mind goes down, your feet too will soon travel." Consider these passages of Scripture: II Corinthians 10:3-5; Philippians 2:5; 4:7-8; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:3.

3. Spirit
   Nothing can destroy us as quickly as a bad spirit or attitude. Our human spirit is prone to what is wicked and base. Consequently we must constantly fight spirits and attitudes of hate, bitterness, pride, lust, carnality, and so on. (See James 4:5; I Timothy 4:12; Galatians 5:17; II Corinthians 7:1; I John 3:14-15; 4:20-21.)

4. Conscience
   None can live by conscience alone; all must be guided by the Word of God. However, this invisible part of us must first be purged and cleansed by Christ's blood through repentance and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; I Peter 3:21). Then we are to maintain a clean conscience before God lest we be defiled within as were the scribes and Pharisees (Acts 24:16; Romans 13:5; I Timothy 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2; I Peter 3:15-16).

Many elements and components compose the totality of the inward person. So much demands our attention; however, it is so important for Christians to give careful attention to the hidden person of the heart. If we keep this area pure and clean, we will not encounter problems with outward holiness.

B. **OUTWARD MAN**

This term is somewhat restricted and confined and more easily identified than the inward person. This part is visible to us and others, while our inward person is seen only by the Lord.

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Some, especially in later years, have tried to negate the importance of any outward code of Christian conduct by removing a verse of Scripture from its context and grossly misapplying it. I Samuel 16:7 states, "For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." From this some have misconstrued Scripture by trying to make it say that God does not care about our outward appearance—He just looks at the heart and nothing else. In context, this passage relates to Samuel anointing a new king for Israel. He was looking at the size, age, and strength of Jesse's sons when God said these words to him. David was to be king though he was young and perhaps not as large as the others. This verse has absolutely nothing to do with dress, godly conduct, Christian graces, and so on.

God is interested in our outward appearance but not this alone. The fallacy of the scribes and Pharisees was in trying to cover inward evil by outwardly appearing righteous, God hates such hypocrisy. He emphasizes that we should clean up the inside *first* and then clean up the outside.

Separation from the world by the church is taught throughout the New Testament. Living a clean, upright, moral life of purity is laudable for anyone; however, it is a necessity for Christians. Before conversion, one may present an outward appearance of righteousness. Nothing is wrong with this, so long as it is not done in hypocrisy to cover inward defilement. God's plan for us is that we have both an outward appearance of holiness and an inward life of holiness simultaneously. We must constantly work on and improve both areas until they meet God's criteria set forth in the Bible.

First cleanse that which is within, and then make clean the outside; this is God's priority. Since we have established God's due order, let us examine briefly the next step: cleansing the outward man. Your pastor will serve as an excellent guide and counselor in this area. Remember, God's Word is the final authority.

1. The Body Is the Temple of God

   Paul established this fact in I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:15-20. He further informed us of the following facts relative to the physical body:

   a. The spirit of God dwells in us.
   b. God will destroy this temple if we defile it.
   c. The temple of God is holy, which temple we are.
   d. Our bodies are the members of Christ.

NOTES:

e. Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.
f. We were bought with a price.
g. We are to glorify God in our *body* and *spirit*.

Since our bodies are the temple of God and we glorify Him in them, surely we are to be distinct in our lifestyle from those who are sinners.

2. God Demands Separation

Almost everyone believes in separation to some degree, some more than others. As Christians our separation should not be one degree less than the demarcation that God has established in His Word.

If our lifestyle before coming to God was sending us to hell, should it not be greatly altered if we expect to go to heaven? Separation is both logical and scriptural (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

Let us note the contrasts between, and the inability to comingle, right with wrong.

a. Believers and unbelievers are not to be unequally yoked.
b. Righteousness and unrighteousness have no fellowship.
c. Light and darkness have no communion.
d. Christ and Belial have no concord.
e. Believers and infidels have no part.
f. The temple of God and idols have no agreement.

Paul charged us in this text to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

3. Works of the Flesh Keep Us out of the Kingdom of God

Our human, Adamic nature constantly wars against the Spirit, as the flesh seeks to manifest its evils. Study the works of the flesh in view of their separating us from God both now and eternally (Galatians 5:16-21). Study in contrast the fruit of the Spirit and what it produces (Galatians 5:22-23). Cultivate the fruit of the Spirit and crucify the flesh (Galatians 5:24).

4. "Abstain from All Appearance of Evil"

Those who declare that God is only interested in what is on the inside

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need to take note of this verse (I Thessalonians 5:22), along with the following:

a. If God was not interested in apparel, why did He clothe the nakedness of Adam and Eve? (Genesis 3:21).

b. The Lord classifies some attire as "the attire of an harlot" (Proverbs 7:10; Genesis 38:14-15). Our clothing can say a lot about us!

c. God is interested in our hair (I Corinthians 11:1-16; I Timothy 2:9). See earlier lesson on "New Testament Teaching Concerning Hair."

d. We are to dress modestly and avoid ornamentation with gold, pearls, and costly array (I Peter 3:1-5; I Timothy 2:8-15).

e. God wants our conduct and speech to be godly at all times (I Thessalonians 5:22; Colossians 3:8; Ephesians 4:9; James 3:1-18; I Peter 2:1).

5. God Demands Moral Purity

Before and after marriage Christians are not to engage in any type of immoral conduct. We are to keep our hearts and our bodies pure before God (Matthew 5:27-28, 31-32; 19:3-9; I Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:15-18).

REFLECTIONS

Christians should let their lights so shine before people until they see their good works and glorify God (Matthew 5:16). By all means, let us develop a well-rounded, balanced, wholesome, Christian lifestyle on the outside, balanced by purity within. As such we will be beautiful in God's eyes and become a good example to those about us. Oh, for people to see Christ in us, both in body and in the spirit we manifest!

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 21

FIRST—CLEANSE THAT WHICH IS WITHIN

1. Christian dress and conduct must stem from an internal experience, or else it is merely a display of individual discipline. T _____ F _____
2. *First* in our lesson comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
3. Although each of us is one person or entity, God describes us as having _____ major parts.
4. Man is composed of (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
5. In this lesson, soul and spirit together compose the _____ person.
6. Jesus compared the inward person to a _____ and a _____.
7. Name three things we are to put off.
   (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
8. Name three things we are to put on.
   (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
9. Give the four areas of our lives that can become defiled.
   (A) _____, (B) _____, (C) _____, (D) _____.
10. Satan has access to our mind. T _____ F _____
11. Nothing can destroy us as quickly as a bad _____ or _____.
12. A person can live by his conscience alone. T _____ F_____
13. Does the Scripture "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7) apply to outward dress or standards of holiness? Yes _____ No _____
14. _____from the world is taught by the church and throughout the New Testament.
15. Our body is the _____ of God.

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16. We are to glorify God in our _____ and _____.
17. Believers and unbelievers are not to be _____ yoked together.
18. We are to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit and _____ the flesh.
19. Christians are to abstain from all _____ of evil.
20. We are to let our _____ shine before others.

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LESSON 22

NOTES:

SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES
PART VI

FIRST—PRAYERS BE MADE FOR ALL MEN
I TIMOTHY 2:1-4

Our text includes an admonition to offer supplications, intercessions, prayers, and giving of thanks for all people. This is an all-inclusive statement reaching the entire universe—*"all men"*! What a call, challenge, and responsibility for all Christians!

Since volumes I and II have presented many things on the subject of prayer, I will limit my remarks to devote needed space to other topics. I hope that I have presented enough to motivate you to a consistent, rewarding prayer life. Never could we give too much time or space to the worthy cause of prayer; however, I trust you understand and accept the brevity of this lesson. Use this as a launching pad for extended study and teaching on prayer.

Again we are confronted with the need to prioritize our conduct as Christians. In studying the context of our text, we find Paul admonishing Timothy to remember everyone in his prayers. Paul further encouraged him to give special attention to kings and everyone in authority. When we consider that the Roman empire ruled the world at this time with unrelenting rigor, it becomes obvious that most people would not ordinarily be inclined to pray for such rulers.

This is a tremendous lesson to saints everywhere. None of us choose the form of government under which we serve God. Agreed, it is easier to function in a democracy, where freedom abounds. We must remember, however, that people have lived for God under all types of governmental systems, which often presented circumstances beyond their control. Nevertheless, God calls upon us to pray for our rulers, even if they be tyrants of the basest sort.

A pattern emerges from this teaching relative to both prayer and submission. It is only when we pray for others that we can be submissive to them, and it is only when we are submissive to authority that we can truly be Christian.

Study other passages as they relate to the following words.

- **Supplications**
  "Supplication" comes from the Greek word *deesis* (deh'-ay-sis), meaning a

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petition or request. This is an entreaty and can even mean to beg. To supplicate, according to Webster, is to entreat for, seek by earnest prayer, petition earnestly. (See Daniel 9, a great chapter on supplication; Hebrews 5:7; Acts 1:14; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18.)

- **Prayers**
  "Prayer" comes from the Greek word *proseuche* (pros-yoo-khay'), meaning to worship, to pray to God. Praying includes but is not limited to (1) seeking, (2) asking, (3) knocking, (4) requesting, (5) desiring, (6) entreating, (7) beseeching. (See II Corinthians 5:20; 8:4; Mark 7:32; 11:24; Philippians 4:6; Matthew 7:7-8.)

- **Intercessions**
  "Intercession" comes from the Greek word *enteuxis* (ent'-yoak-sis), meaning interview, supplication, prayers. W. E. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words,* gave the meaning as seeking the presence and hearing of God on behalf of others (Romans 8:26-34; 11:2).

- **Giving of Thanks**
  "Thanks" comes from the Greek word *eucharistia* (yoo-khar-is-tee'), meaning gratitude, grateful language, giving of thanks as an act of worship (I Timothy 4:1-4; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20).

With the above mentioned ways we are to approach God for everyone. We are to offer prayers in this fashion for everyone, including those in authority.

God's Word sets forth many things for believers to perform and engage themselves in. We have covered several of these in this series on "Scriptural Priorities" as well as other lessons. Let it be stated for the record—*all* of these should be *preceded* by prayer. Prayer furnishes the impetus and power to perform all other Christian duties. Sinners can find their way to the God, from whom they have been alienated, when they pray. How much more can God's elect gain His attention in prayer!

Before we engage ourselves in any activity involving the work of God, let us take time to go to God in prayer. It is before His throne of grace that we obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Let us note the reasons that Paul set forth as to why we are to pray with such diligence.

A. **THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE**

Paul knew that in response to prayer God could provide a peaceful environment for His church to function in. Christians who live in a political storm

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caused by ruling tyrants, undergo undue hardships; their work and witnessing are hindered, and unneeded turmoil assails their lives.

Those who live in a peaceful nation should thank God, while remaining faithful in prayer for their leaders. They should also remember brethren in other lands who face turmoil and persecution, realizing that none of us are safe from war and upheaval. Paul declared that living a quiet, peaceable life in godliness and honesty is good and acceptable in the sight of God (I Timothy 2:2-3).

We should further note that God wants us to be submissive in whatever political setting or whatever form of government we find ourselves under, so long as it does not conflict with God's Word. We are to be responsible, law-abiding citizens, seeking to exemplify Christ every way we can (Romans 13:1-8). If man's law should conflict with God's law, we are under obligation to obey God's law regardless of the cost. (For example, note the three Hebrews in Daniel 3:1-25 and the apostles in Acts 5:24-42.) Paul himself always paid due respect to authority (Acts 23:1-5; 26:1-3). Prayer for and submission to authority, whether civil or spiritual, is God's directive to His people.

B. **THAT MEN MIGHT BE SAVED**

God's highest and ultimate purpose is to save the lost. Calvary's design was for the lost of all time. What a price He paid for humanity! He who was rich became poor that through His poverty we might become rich (II Corinthians 8:9). He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), as He exemplified in Luke 15.

In I Timothy 2:1-4 Paul instructed us regarding prayer to the end that we may live in a peaceful environment. He then expressed God's will that everyone be saved. On casual notice no correlation exists; however, through examination it becomes obvious that political turmoil or governmental oppression often hinders the spread of the gospel. This in turn can cause people to be lost, since they do not have access to truth. Here again, the power and purpose of prayer comes to the forefront. Prayer for kings and those in authority can ultimately effect the salvation of the lost from sin.

REFLECTIONS

Quite a chain reaction can occur when we pray. First, God can put up or put down whom He wills in order to create a climate of peace for His people to dwell in. No power pres-

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ents such formidable strength that God can not break through it when we pray. The Book of Judges is an excellent example of God's deliverance when His people cry to Him. We also need to learn this lesson (I Samuel 2:6-9).

No foe can stop the forward movement of God's church. It has survived the Dark Ages, wars, revolutions, extreme persecutions; it has penetrated every curtain including the Iron and Bamboo.

It is obvious that prayer can help create a peaceful political setting and produce fertile ground for gospel seed. Truth spreads faster when people can move freely, teach openly, and print Bibles and literature. For such a climate we pray! For our nation we give thanks. For our leaders we offer supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. For freedom we rejoice! God has answered prayer! Now let us pray unrelentingly until our world knows Jesus Christ through the experience of Acts 2:1-4, 38.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 22

FIRST—PRAYERS BE MADE FOR ALL MEN

1. This lesson teaches us that we are to pray for "all _____."
2. What empire ruled the world at the time of Paul's writing? _____.
3. If our rulers are tyrants, we are not to pray for them. T _____ F _____.
4. It is only when we pray for others that we can be _____ to them.
5. *Supplication* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning to _____.
6. *Prayer* in our text means _____.
7. *Intercession* in this lesson means _____.
8. *Giving of thanks* in our study means _____.
9. Prayer furnishes the impetus and power to perform all other Christian duties. T_____ F _____.
10. Can a sinner find his way to God through prayer? Yes _____ No_____.
11. At the throne of grace we obtain _____ and find _____ to help in the time of need.
12. We are to pray that we may lead a _____ and _____ life.
13. Are Christians to be law-abiding citizens? Yes _____ No _____.
14. If man's law conflicts with God's, we are to obey _____ law.
15. Paul refused to respect the authority of the Roman government. T _____ F_____.
16. Another reason we are to pray is that people might be _____.
17. God's highest and ultimate purpose is to make us healthy, wealthy, and wise. T _____ F_____.
18. Christ came to seek and to save the _____. Scripture:_____.
19. Governmental oppression can hinder the spread of the gospel. T _____ F_____.
20. What book in the Bible is an excellent example of God delivering His people from tyrants and bondage when they called upon Him? _____.

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LESSON 23

NOTES:

SCRIPTURAL PRIORITIES
PART VII

FIRST—COUNT THE COST
LUKE 14:25-33

In our text Jesus Christ gave one of the greatest lessons ever taught on discipleship. The requirements that He established for this noble position sound strong and demanding—and they are. Being a disciple of our Lord requires more than the token lip service that so many are paying today. Yet when we compare the reward with the demands, the cost is extremely cheap.

Commitment to Christ must run deep to attain the biblical designation of "disciple." "Disciple" comes from the Greek word *matheteuo* (math-ayt-yoo'-o), meaning to become a pupil, to disciple, to enroll as a scholar, to instruct, or to teach. By extension, from this root word we get our English word *discipline*. Obviously one cannot be a disciple of Christ without discipline.

Submission to discipline is one of the hardest things for our flesh to do. Clearly, though, this is God's pattern for making people into what He wants them to be. Disciplining ourselves until we can submit to the hands of the potter to be made as He wishes, following the Shepherd wherever He may lead, answering His call to go where He bids us, forsaking all to be His follower—these are prerequisites for true discipleship.

Admittedly, one who comes to Christ but possesses little knowledge of the Bible may not fully understand what God expects of him. Early in our Christian walk, we often do not fully grasp the real meaning of complete surrender to God. Nevertheless, as we progress in our relationship with Christ, His plan for our lives begins to fall into place. Through prayer and fasting, Bible reading, church attendance, Bible teaching in Sunday School and other teaching sessions, God's demands for discipleship become clear to us. Consequently our growth in Christ develops for us a keen awareness of what He expects of us. To please our master we become willing to meet any demand or pay any price.

When confronted with Christ's requirements for being His follower, we must never allow the flesh, world, or Satan to dupe us into thinking that the price is too great. Heaven is worth any price! The blessings and rewards of being a Christian on earth are beyond description. The glories awaiting us either at death or the catching away of the church will more than repay us for any sacrifice we have made.

Whether you are contemplating becoming a Christian or are already one, I beseech you

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to count the cost carefully. While counting the cost, I would advise you to look beyond any temporary discomfort, adjustments, and change of lifestyle that you may encounter. Yes, these are temporary, for not always will we be on earth bearing our Christian cross; soon we will go on to our reward. So many are blinded to the future by the present, while God would have us to view the entire spectrum of life and eternity. Therefore, weigh your decisions in the scale of eternity before refusing to become His disciple.

Before we begin to build or do battle, *first* we must count the cost. This lesson cannot include every detail of what we must render to God; it will offer only the larger picture, the basics, and the foundation. From here, it becomes a personal encounter between you and your master. To him you will stand or fall. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

A. **THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP**

Here we discuss the direct teachings of Christ from our Scripture text. Other discipleship demands appear throughout the Bible and should be coordinated with these.

1. One must hate his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, sisters, and his own life. "Hate" in this passage does not mean for us to have an intense dislike or disregard for, or to detest, our loved ones. "Hate" here comes from the Greek word *miseo* (mis-eh'-o), which simply means to love less. From this we can understand Jesus' words. We are to love our family, those dearest to us, less than we love God.

2. We must bear our cross to be a disciple. Correlating Luke 14:27 with Luke 9:23 produces these guidelines relative to cross bearing:

    a. We must deny ourselves. Self-denial is one of the most difficult steps for any of us to make. However, it is a necessary step if we are to be His disciples.

    b. We must take up our cross daily. Our cross is not our domestic problems, financial obligations, or physical difficulties. These are problems of life that everyone, even sinners, must encounter. Our cross furnishes us with, and becomes the means by which, we are crucified to the world and the world to us (Galatians 6:14). It involves only those things we must bear or endure because we are a Christian but would not have to suffer if we were not. Our cross is our identity with Christ, our separation from sin, and our complete obedience to His Word. It is this that we must take up and bear daily.

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c. We must follow Him. We can do so only when we follow the directives of the Word of God.

Jesus Christ presented two analogies relative to counting the cost. One describes a builder; the other describes a warrior.

B. COUNTING THE COST

Before we build or before we do battle spiritually, our Lord admonishes us to count the cost. One thing Jesus never did was conceal the cost of being His follower. Not once did He indicate that following Him would cost nothing or require no sacrifice. Christ's demands are great, but His compensation is greater. When we consider how great is the cost of not being His disciple, then the price of following Him becomes small indeed.

Some modernists have so reconstructed discipleship until, according to their doctrine, being a Christian does not require any noticeable change of life, discomfort, cost, or allegiance whatsoever. This is very different from Calvary's demands upon our Lord. We must remember that the disciple is not above his master (Luke 6:40). To follow Jesus as a disciple does have certain costs that He expects us to pay.

1. The Cost of Building

Jesus taught those who contemplated following Him using the illustration of a man building a tower. Anyone planning a project of such proportions would certainly sit down and *first* count the cost to see if he had sufficient funds to finish the project. Beginning to build without doing so could result in a foundation in place but insufficient capital to complete the job. The outcome of this would be the scorn of those who beheld his failure and mocked him because he was unable to finish.

Within ourselves we do not have sufficient means with which to serve God and complete the Christian effort. We do not need to fear, however, for God has provisions. If we are willing to pay the price required of us, He then will supply the rest.

The Scripture often describes living for God, walking with Him, and being His disciple in terms of building. Studying these illustrations and learning from them can be of tremendous benefit to us so that we do not fail.

NOTES:

a. Jesus likened our response to the Word to that of two men—one who built on sand, the other on rock (Matthew 7:24-29). We are building our lives on one or the other. Regardless of which one we choose, we will encounter the same storms. Our destruction or survival depends on the foundation.

b. We, the church, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20; I Peter 2:4-8; Isaiah 28:16). Christ cannot just be one of many building blocks in our lives; we must build our lives upon Him.

c. Since Christ is the foundation—the chief cornerstone—no other foundation can be laid. Therefore we use caution in how or what we build upon this foundation (I Corinthians 3:10-15).

d. We are to build up ourselves in our most holy faith (Jude 20). Being rooted, built up in Him, and established in the faith will keep us from being spoiled through philosophy, vain deceit, after human traditions, and after the rudiments of the world (Colossians 2:6-8). The Word of His grace is able to build us up (Acts 20:32).

e. Beginning with the foundation of Christ and our faith in Him, we are to add to our faith and build on this foundation seven things in order to secure our position in Christ (II Peter 1:3-10).

1. Add to faith, virtue.
2. Add to virtue, knowledge.
3. Add to knowledge, temperance.
4. Add to temperance, patience.
5. Add to patience, godliness.
6. Add to godliness, brotherly kindness.
7. Add to brotherly kindness, charity.

Building our lives in such fashion assures us of the following things, according to the apostle Peter:

1. Not being barren.
2. Not being unfruitful.
3. Not being blind and unable to see afar off.
4. Not forgetting that we have been purged from our sins.
5. Not falling.

Engaging in the building project of life, becoming what God

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wants us to be, and building on a sure foundation involves tremendous cost on the part of a saint. Sacrifices of untold proportions have been paid in order to finish the tower. History is replete with those who have given all, even to death, to follow the Lord. The work progresses as each generation not only counts the cost, but also pays the price.

Whatever we have vowed to pay, let us not defer (Ecclesiastes 5:4-6). We should never withhold what we have committed, as Ananias and Sapphira did (Acts 5:1-11). As David, let us not offer to God that which costs nothing (II Samuel 24:24). Christ made the cost of discipleship—building a tower—clear and plain. We have not been deceived or tricked; living for God does exact a toll.

2. The Cost of Battle

Jesus next turned the minds of prospective disciples to an analogy of a king going to battle. Facing him are 20,000 men and he has only 10,000 men with which to go to war. Before engaging in a battle with such great odds, he first sits down in consultation, reckoning and counting the cost. He ascertains the odds before he makes a move. A formidable foe is out there, and he must decide either to pay the expected toll or else send an ambassador to negotiate a peace treaty.

From this example Jesus established that a military leader cannot win a battle unless he is willing and able to bear the cost. To win and to be a disciple of Christ, the cost is clear and the price tag is readable. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). Forsaking all, according to Jesus, is a prerequisite for being His disciple!

Discipleship thus becomes a battleground. We face a formidable foe in Satan, but we have assurance of victory because *greater* is He that is in us than He that is in the world (I John 4:4).

Repeatedly the Scripture compares living for God and being His disciple to war, being a soldier, conflict, fighting, and using weapons. Paul often drew parallels for Christians who were doing battle against the enemy of their soul. Today the fight rages on; therefore, we too can derive strength, support, and guidance from these illustrations. Many Old Testament struggles, both literal and spiritual, provide resource material for the student or teacher. Let us consider and add to the following instructions:

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a. Paul warned Timothy to flee from some things and then follow: (1) righteousness, (2) godliness, (3) faith, (4) love, (5) patience, (6) meekness—thereby fighting the good fight (I Timothy 6:11-12). There is a *great* fight of affliction (Hebrews 10:32-39). It was this fight that Paul fought well (II Timothy 4:7-8).

b. True believers are striving for mastery over the flesh, the world, and Satan. Obtaining this goal demands that we strive lawfully (according to Scripture) if we are to be crowned (I Corinthians 9:24-27; II Timothy 2:5; 4:7).

c. Satan, our enemy (Matthew 13:25-28), strategically places in our paths many snares and obstacles to defeat us in this battle. He attacks us with temptation, just as he did our Lord (Matthew 4:1-11). When the enemy comes in like a flood, then the Spirit raises up a standard against him (Isaiah 59:19). Our foe can never rejoice against us, for though we fall, we shall arise again (Micah 7:8).

d. Battles need soldiers to fight them; this is where you and I fit in God's plan. We are the soldiers of the Lord fighting against the unseen enemy of our soul and God's kingdom. We live in the flesh, but we do not war after the flesh; this is a spiritual battle between forces not seen by human eye. Nevertheless our fight is just as real as those fought by people in the flesh. As soldiers we suffer hardships, deprivation, and affliction. But who ever supposed the life of a soldier to be easy? Many restrictions, demands, and much training are the lot of a soldier's life. Study as many items as you can think of in relation to being a soldier, applying them to yourself in a scriptural manner (II Timothy 2:1-5; 4:5).

   God has provided weapons for this battle (II Corinthians 10:4), along with an impenetrable armor (Ephesians 6:10-18). He assures us that no satanic weapon formed against us will prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

e. War is a bone-chilling word for any who have known its ravages and devastation. As gruesome as it sounds, this is what Christians are engaged in. Discipleship involves war, and to win this war, *first* we count the cost. Upon counting it we discover that the price tag reads, "*Forsaking . . . all*" (Luke 14:33).

   Satan's army is large and powerful, confronting us like a Goliath.

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But, as David, we go in the name of the Lord, ultimately achieving victory.

A war is on, and it will not cease for us until we win our personal victory either at death or the catching away of the church. Study this spiritual battle and warfare in view of the following scriptural passages:

1. Our weapons are not carnal, and we do not war after the flesh (II Corinthians 10:3-5). Satan's strongholds are exposed here as: (a) imaginations, (b) high things exalting themselves against the knowledge of God, (c) thoughts not in obedience to Christ. Much of our battle is in our mind; here we rise or fall. Appropriate God's weapons to yourself and win the war in your mind.

2. God's warriors do not entangle themselves in the affairs of this life (II Timothy 2:4).

3. Fleshly lusts war against our soul (I Peter 2:11). Seek to identify these lusts, conquering them through His might (James 4:1; Galatians 5:16-21).

4. Paul charged Timothy to "war a good warfare" (I Timothy 1:18-20), lest he become a shipwreck concerning faith. This is a good fight of faith that is well worth any cost we may encounter (I Timothy 6:12). So many battles and wars are for such insignificant causes. Society is in a constant conflict over unimportant issues, especially when compared to eternal values. However, this war is a worthwhile conflict; those who win will receive a crown on that day (II Timothy 4:7-8).

REFLECTIONS

God's Word tells us what He wants us to engage in *first*. These lessons have carried us through the priorities that our Lord established for our lives. Our opinions on what we should do first are often in conflict with God's plan. By His help let us rearrange our thinking and lifestyles to meet God's criteria for us as Christians.

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Allow the Holy Ghost to empower you and God's Word to instruct you in your decisions. Our flesh works opposite to, and in conflict with, these divine forces of direction. Building and battling are a part of Christian discipleship. Although the cost may be great, the rewards are always greater than the price we are called upon to pay.

May God grant you a discerning heart and mind to know what God desires of you. May He enable you to put first things first. Then, as He promised: "All these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). When God makes demands on your resources, never turn away, as did the rich young ruler, or turn back and walk with Him no more, as many of His disciples did (John 6:66). Arise to the occasion, placing first in your life the One who was before all things and by whom all things consist (Colossians 1:17).

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 23

FIRST—COUNT THE COST

1. The word *disciple* comes from the Greek word _____, meaning _____.
2. Our English word _____, comes from the word disciple.
3. *Hate*, in our Scripture text, comes from the Greek word _____, meaning to _____.
4. What are the three requirements relative to cross bearing?
   (A) _____, (B) _____,
   (C)_____.
5. Before we build or battle we are to count the _____.
6. The _____ is not above his master.
7. Jesus taught those who contemplated following Him with the illustration of a man building a _____.
8. Jesus likened our lives to that of two builders. One built on _____; the other on _____.
9. The church is built upon the foundation of the _____ and_____ with _____ being the chief cornerstone.
10. We are to build ourselves up in our most holy _____.
11. We are to add to or build upon our faith _____ things.
12. Name three of the things we are to add to our faith.
    (A) _____, (B) _____,
    (C)_____.
13. If we add to our faith all the things that Peter advised us to, the following two things will occur (five were given—name two): (A) _____,
    (B) _____.
14. Jesus used an illustration of a battle between two armies; one had _____ men the other had _____ men.
15. Paul admonished Timothy to pursue six things. Name three of them.
    (A) _____, (B) _____,
    (C)_____.

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16. For the mastery and to obtain the crown we must strive _____.
17. When the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit raises up a _____ against him.
18. No satanic weapon formed against us will _____.
19. Our weapons are not _____, and we do not war after the flesh.
20. _____lusts war against the soul (I Peter 2:11).

LESSON 24

NOTES:

AGREEMENT PRAYING

MATTHEW 18:19-20

Prayer is a multifaceted exercise in which all Christians should engage. Jesus taught us *how* to pray in the model prayer that He gave to His disciples. He further reinforced the need to pray by setting an example for us in prayer. We can find numerous guidelines and regulations relative to prayer in the Scripture. It sets forth hindrances to answered prayer for us either to avoid or correct. The Bible also records numerous types of prayer, lengths of prayer, and places of prayer.

Note: Lessons 12 and 13 in Volume I are on prayer and cover many of the things mentioned above. Refer to them at this juncture.

Another dimension, type, or facet of prayer that Jesus taught is *agreement praying*. Often we overlook or ignore this avenue of prayer, all to our hurt, simply because we have failed to implement it in our lives alongside other means or types of praying. Once we understand and establish the principle of agreement praying in our lives, we will obtain powerful results.

Agreement praying simply means involving at least one or more other individuals in your prayer life. To be effective, this method requires that one or more people join us in prayer, asking God to supply some special need or answer some specific request we may have. We may also share their burden with them, if they choose to ask, thereby returning the favor by praying with them concerning their needs. Usually this system of prayer works best when it is limited to two and no more than three people. However, we share some needs with an entire church congregation. Each prayer request must be judged on its own merits. Many of our needs are personal and are of such nature that we cannot publicize them. These types of needs call for agreement praying. Some needs are too heavy to be borne alone, too personal to make public, and yet are of such nature that we can divulge them to one or two other Christians. Jesus, knowing this, established the principle of agreement praying through which we agree, ask, and receive.

We will make most of our prayers to God on an individual basis without involving another person. While nothing is wrong with this kind of praying, often matters arise in our lives that create a need for assistance in prayer. Some things are beyond us, disorient us, and almost destroy us. In times like these we would be wise to turn to a trusted friend, enlisting him for support and as a prayer partner. Selectivity at this juncture is

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important, and we will discuss it later in the lesson.

DEFINITIONS

Understanding this term from a biblical perspective is essential before we engage someone else in helping us pray.

- **Agree**—comes from the Greek word *sumphoneo* (soom-fo-neh'-o), meaning to be harmonious, be in accord, be suitable, stipulate by compact, agree together. *Sumphoneo* comes from the root word *sun*, which means union, with or together, association, and companionship. Other words derived from *sun* carry similar meanings that denote accordance, unison of sound, accordant, co-spirited, like-minded, etc.

  Webster defines *agree* as: (1) to be of one mind, (2) to harmonize in opinion.

  Agreement is synonymous with accordance, concurrence, compact, contract, covenant, and harmony.

- **Touching**—comes from the Greek root word *peri* (per-ee'), meaning with respect to, about, on behalf of or concerning.

Other biblical passages use this basic term to show the strength and binding power of an agreement. Things that do not agree are shown in their contrasting state, exhibiting a lack of harmony or togetherness.

1. Matthew 20:1-16 presents the story of laborers in a vineyard who agree to work for a penny a day. Others who worked less time received the same compensation, thus prompting the original employees to complain. Due to their agreement they were paid as stipulated, showing the binding power of an agreement.

2. Acts 5:1-11 records the account of Ananias and Sapphira, who agreed to keep back part of the money they had received for a possession. Not only did they agree on this, they apparently agreed to tell the same lie about it. Although they agreed for an evil purpose and as a result died; nevertheless, we see the power and effectiveness of an agreement.

3. In Luke 5:36 Jesus told us that we should not put a new piece of cloth on an old garment because the "new agreeth not with the old." Unity, compatibility, and uniformity must exist for an agreement to be made and for it to work. An

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underlying lesson exists here for when we consider entering an agreement with someone in prayer: there must be uniformity and compatibility for our prayers to be effective.

Although the agreements are vastly different in these three accounts, from them we can learn tremendous lessons applicable to our agreeing with one another in prayer.

WHY WE NEED AGREEMENT PRAYING

Numerous reasons exist as to why we need agreement praying, whether we join someone else in his need or engage someone else to help us pray about our need. More important than any other reason, Jesus taught us to employ this method and showed the workability of this type of prayer.

Our reasons for revealing our private, individual prayer requests must always stem from the purest of motives and desires. Divulging a matter to another, even for prayer, should never break a confidence, be an expression of hate, reveal marital problems, or involve a new convert in any type of church conflict. Agreement praying is not an avenue to use gossip, expose family secrets, spread rumors or suspicions, relate settled church problems of yesteryear, or to express grudges, hatred, and bitterness.

When we share a matter of concern or a burden with another person, we should do so on the basis of integrating another's faith and prayers with ours in order to receive an answer from God. When two or more petition God on this basis, they have the promise of God's presence as well as an answer.

Consider the following reasons why we need agreement praying, and then add others as you practice this form of praying:

1. A large group can either pass over or forget our prayer requests.

2. We can share matters too large or heavy to be borne by an individual, and consequently the load is lightened.

3. Friendship, trust, and camaraderie develop between individuals when they join in prayer.

4. When numerous prayer requests are made in a public church service, individual needs lose their impact due to the multitude of requests. However, this should not stop us from making our requests known to the entire church when

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it is possible to do so.

5. Our need can be focused upon more specifically when only one or two others know the seriousness of the request.

6. Ministers are so inundated with prayer requests from so many people until it becomes almost impossible for them to focus upon individual needs. Again, this should not deter us from sharing our needs and problems with our pastor.

7. Someone compatible with us and our circumstances, i.e., widow, teenager, minister, divorced person, single parent, widower, may better understand our need.

Many reasons exist for us to join another in prayer. The most important reason is that Jesus taught us to do so.

AREAS IN WHICH WE MUST AGREE

Fragmented, disjointed, piecemeal efforts at prayer are always ineffective. Not only must we persevere in prayer, we must be focused in prayer. This is especially true when we enter into an agreement with another regarding prayer requests. Harmonizing, concentrating, and uniting our energies together in the following areas will produce the desired results.

1. In spirit—Due to differences in personalities it is always wise to join in prayer with someone with whom we are comfortable. Two cannot walk together except they agree (Amos 3:3). It is important for us to find an amiable person that we have confidence in when entering into an agreement on prayer.

2. On the request—All requests should be specific, biblical, and ethical. We should never enter into an agreement with anyone to pray about anything unscriptural, dishonest, or improper.

   Make your request known only to your prayer partner. Telling everyone dilutes the concept of agreement praying.

3. In faith—All who are in the covenant must believe together for the same results. Wavering, double-minded, fragmented efforts manifest unbelief and stop us from seeing the desired results. Unbelief stopped Jesus from performing miracles (Mark 6:5-6). It will also stop our prayers from being answered.

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4. In perseverance—I have prayed for the same thing repeatedly for years before I saw my prayer answered. Some prayers are answered quickly, and others take time, but when we ask according to Scripture, we should never give up. The pray-er (person) may die, but the prayer (request) never dies. Asking, seeking, and knocking is the scriptural method for obtaining answers to prayer.

5. In effort—Our asking God for help must often be coupled with works. When in an agreement with someone, it would serve our purpose well if all partners visited the sick person for whom we are praying. We may also write someone, fast together, send a tape of an uplifting sermon, or work together at the altar with someone. Some prayers need legs put to them. Let us agree not only to pray but also to work together to see our desire brought to pass.

6. In results—When a prayer is answered for you, share the results with your partner. Rejoice together, tell your pastor, testify about it, sing a song, or write an article. Rejoice and be thankful when you obtain the desired results.

Concisely put, we must not allow the enemy to divide us in any area of our endeavor. Agreeing on all points and presenting a united front will bring victory.

THINGS WE SHOULD AGREE ON

The following is not a comlete list of the things we can enter into agreement praying about. Anything scriptural and in the will of God can be a proper subject. But the following are presented for your consideration:

1. Salvation of souls—This should be a priority for all of us in our prayer life. Agreeing with another to pray for people to be saved is always in order.

    a. Sinners—Those who have never been saved should command first place in our prayers. We should pray for family members, friends, neighbors, and even those unknown to us, when we enter into an agreement on prayer.

    b. Saints—We should pray for members of the body of Christ whom we know to be weak, discouraged, or undergoing great trial. We should join with someone to pray for him, not to gossip about his problem. Then it would be wise for those in the agreement to visit that individual.

2. Healing for the sick—Refer to lesson 3 in this volume. It is well to agree with

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another in prayer for someone who is sick.

a. When you are sick—It is usually wise, especially in a lingering sickness or a life-threatening disease, to have someone join you in prayer for your healing. Sickness weakens our body and often our faith. Therefore two are better than one, and when we fall another can lift us up (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

b. When others are sick—Those who are well and healthy would do well to join their faith and prayer for the healing of another person they know to be in need.

3. When needs arise—When we lose a job, family problems arise, child-rearing problems occur, financial pressure comes against us, and so on, it is good to have someone pray with us for a resolution. All of us have needs peculiar to our own lives and personalities; we should not be shy about enlisting a friend to help us pray about them.

Whatever lends itself to the need of a prayer partner, by all means engage one to help you pray. Do not suffer alone in silence; you could be overwhelmed and defeated by Satan. Go to someone you trust and ask him to pray with you until victory comes.

EXAMPLES OF AGREEMENT PRAYING

God's Word is replete with instances where two or more joined their efforts to obtain a desired end. God honors such faith and has promised us an answer. Let these examples strengthen your faith and resolve to get involved in agreement praying.

1. Daniel—When Nebuchadnezzar forgot his dream and no one could recall it for him, Daniel was threatened with death along with the other wise men. Daniel asked for time and then enlisted his three friends in an effort to solve the king's problem. As they waited in prayer, God recalled the dream to Daniel and gave him the interpretation, thus sparing his life (Daniel 2:14-19).

2. Jarius's daughter resurrected—Jesus allowed only Peter, James, John, Jarius, and his wife in the room with Him when He prayed. He put all others out of the room (Mark 5:22-43). Could it be that they were not in agreement that the girl would be raised from the dead?

3. Pentecost—The Book of Acts records how the unity of believers who were

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focused upon one thing brought desired results. When they were in agreement, great events occurred.

a. Acts 1:14—The disciples of Christ were in an upper room in one accord in prayer and supplication.
b. Acts 2:1-4—As a result of being in one accord in one place, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.
c. Acts 2:46—After the church came into existence believers were daily with one accord in the Temple.

4. Handkerchiefs and aprons sent by Paul—Paul agreed with the one carrying the handkerchief or apron that results would follow, and sure enough, special miracles were wrought (Acts 19:11-12). Diseases departed and evil spirits went out of those who received the cloths. It would be best if the person receiving an anointed cloth would agree with the minister and the messenger who brings it. However, if only the minister and the person requesting the anointed cloths agree, miracles can still be wrought. Agreement praying requires only the consent of two people for it to be effective.

5. Transfiguration of Jesus—This event occurred not before a multitude but in the presence of Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1-9). As at the resurrection of Jarius's daughter, they were brought into His confidence.

   Later when Jesus needed these men to watch with Him in prayer, they failed to keep their part of the agreement (Matthew 26:36-45). May this be a lesson to us not to fail when someone else is depending on our prayers.

6. Peter's deliverance—This was the result of several believers—how many we do not know—entering into a house and agreeing in prayer for Peter to be delivered from prison (Acts 12:1-19).

7. Calling for elders—When we call for the elders to pray for us, this is another form of agreement praying. Our faith, joined with that of others, brings healing (James 5:14-15).

Nothing hinders and thwarts the plan of God like disunity, disharmony, and disconcerted efforts. However, nothing is more potent in the kingdom of God than unity—two or more agreeing as touching any one thing. History and God's Word prove the effectiveness of working together for a common goal. Therefore, agreement praying should be a customary practice among saints today.

It was Jesus who sent His disciples out in twos, and Paul had others to accompany him

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on his missionary journeys. God's principle of unity in purpose and prayer works—try it!

SELECTING A PRAYER PARTNER

This study has unquestionably revealed that agreement praying is scriptural. Now it is necessary for us to exercise wisdom in choosing the proper person with whom to enter into such an agreement. It is extremely important that we share things of a personal nature with someone in whom we have absolute trust and confidence. The following guidelines will aid in selecting the right individual. Precautions are in order at this juncture.

1. Pick out someone in similar circumstances under which you live. This will enable your prayer partner better to understand your feelings.

2. It is never wise to share personal feelings and needs with someone who cannot keep a confidence. People who tell everything they know do not make good prayer partners.

3. You should not divulge family problems or personal problems to a person of the opposite sex unless it is your pastor, someone he recommends, or a close family member. Although these things may need prayer by going outside those mentioned above, problems can arise when you do.

4. You should not tell local church needs, church problems, or difficulties you may have with someone in your local assembly to anyone in another congregation. If you need someone to join you in prayer concerning a situation of this nature, keep it within your own church family. More often than not, you should share these matters with your pastor. Involving the church congregation destroys your church's creditability and can cause problems.

5. If you are joining another in an agreement on a matter that is a problem, you should not keep rehashing and discussing it. Remember, you need a prayer partner to help bring a solution to the situation, not a gossip partner. Constantly talking about a problem keeps it alive and causes it to grow, and prayer cannot have its effect.

6. Select someone you feel is stronger, both physically and spiritually, than you are.

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7. Some prayer partner combinations I would recommend are:
    a. Husband—Wife
    b. Minister—Minister
    c. Pastor—Saint
    d. Father—Son
    e. Mother—Daughter
    f. Friend—Friend

    Others may be included in your agreement and circle of prayer partners. Select them wisely and carefully, since this is an important step in your life.

REFLECTIONS

God's principles that bring achievement, victory, and accomplishment are unity and agreement. His Word teaches us that any kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. Division has weakened and destroyed families, churches, and even nations. Togetherness and love have brought healing, blessing, and salvation to multitudes.

Alone, we are weak and no match for the enemy, but when we join rank and file with God's people in any cause, victory awaits. Prayer becomes an even more powerful force against sickness, sin, and Satan when two or more agree as touching any one thing.

I hope that I have provoked you to employ the strength and faith of a family member, minister, or fellow saint to join you in prayer. Do not struggle alone. Someone eagerly awaits you to invite them into your world to help you bear your burden.

> "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19-20).

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 24

AGREEMENT PRAYING

1. Define agreement praying. _____
   _____
2. *Agree* comes from the Greek word _____,
   meaning _____.
3. *Touching* comes from the Greek word _____ ,
   meaning _____.
4. Another passage in the Bible on the subject of agreement is (Scripture reference):
   _____.
5. Agreement praying is not an avenue for (name two of the five given).
   (A) _____, (B) _____.
6. Give two reasons why we need agreement praying. (A) _____,
   (B)_____.
7. Two cannot walk together except they _____.
   Scripture: _____.
8. Should we enter into an agreement with someone else to pray for something unscriptural? Yes _____ No_____.
9. Unbelief can stop Christ from working. T_____ F _____.
10. When agreeing in effort, name two things you can do together to accomplish your goal. (A) _____, (B)_____.
11. When God answers prayer, we should share in the results in what way? (Name one.) _____
12. Name two of the three things the lesson instructs us to agree on.
    (A) _____, (B) _____.
13. When agreeing to pray for the salvation of souls, we should pray for both _____ and _____ .
14. What king asked Daniel to recall a dream for him? _____.
15. Daniel prayed by himself for an answer. T _____ F _____.
16. Jesus took _____, _____,
    _____, _____,

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and _____ into the room with Him to pray for Jarius's daughter to be raised from the dead.

17. _____ and _____ were sent from Paul, resulting in special miracles.
18. Jesus was transfigured before five hundred people. T _____ F _____.
19. Jesus sent His disciples out in what number? (A) alone (B) sixes (C) threes (D) twos (E) sevens.
20. Give two guidelines in selecting a prayer partner.
    (A)_____.
    (B)_____.

LESSON 25

NOTES:

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

MATTHEW 12:22-37; MARK 3:22-30; LUKE 12:10;
I JOHN 5:16-17

One of the greatest themes of the Bible is forgiveness of sin. Since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we desperately need God's forgiveness in our lives. Without forgiveness of our sins, whenever they occur or whatever their nature, you and I would be hopelessly lost.

God provided the remedy for sin through His incarnation and subsequent human death on the cross. His blood now cleanses us from all sin. Forgiveness of sin is now available to everyone, even for the vilest of sins (Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; 2:13; I John 2:12). When we repent of our sins and get baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are remitted or washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16). Then according to God's promise, we shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38; 2:1-4). Salvation from sin is God's greatest provision for lost humanity. We all need His mercy and grace in order to escape eternal damnation.

Forgiveness of sins is a priority for us and is expressed as such in Jesus' teaching on the unpardonable sin. Obtaining forgiveness is so important that if we cannot acquire it, then we are hopelessly and helplessly doomed. However, this serious topic embodies hope in that Jesus made it clear that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men" (Matthew 12:31), except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. Mark says, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men" (Mark 3:28), except this unpardonable sin.

Although our study revolves around a sin that *cannot* be forgiven; nevertheless, it is important for us to understand the far-reaching scope of God's forgiveness. One of Satan's most effective weapons against us is to make us feel that we have sinned so grievously until God will not forgive us. Nothing could be farther from the truth or more unscriptural than the idea that we are too wicked to be forgiven. If we need forgiveness for anything or any sin (except blasphemy against the Holy Ghost), we can cast ourselves upon His mercies and ask His forgiveness, and our God will abundantly pardon (Isaiah 55:7).

Another ploy of the devil is to make people think they have already blasphemed against the Holy Ghost; therefore, it is useless for them to seek God's forgiveness and mercy. The purpose of this study is, first, to expose this satanic device against us by helping everyone understand what the unpardonable sin really is and what it is not. Second, it is to show and warn everyone how not to blaspheme against the Holy Ghost.

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Note: Before entering into this study, it is essential for you to study each Scripture text carefully. Due to the nature and seriousness of our topic and its irrevocable consequences, we must clearly understand and explain what God's Word says on the subject.

DEFINITIONS

Understanding what "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" means is important for all of us. It is also essential for us to comprehend who the Holy Ghost is in order for us to show the proper reverence and not blaspheme.

- **Blasphemy—**along with the words *blaspheme, blasphemed, blasphemer, blasphemeth, blasphemies*, and *blasphemous*—comes from the following Greek words:

    1. *Blasphemeo* (blas-fay-meh'-o): to vilify, speak impiously, defame, rail on, revile, speak evil.

    2. *Blasphemia* (blas-fay-me'-ah): vilification, especially against God, blasphemy, evil speaking, railing.

    3. *Blasphemos* (blas'-fay-mes): scurrilous, calumnious, impious, railing.

    Webster defines the word *blaspheme* as speaking of sacred things in terms of irreverence; to revile or speak reproachfully of God or anything sacred; to speak evil of, to utter abuse or calumny (slander) against, to curse or revile. Webster defines *blasphemy* as profane or mocking speech, writing, or actions concerning God or anything regarded as sacred; contempt for God; vilification, malicious distraction, abuse.

The meaning of blasphemy becomes obvious from these definitions. Now it is vital for us to know what the *one* thing is we are to refrain from blaspheming. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the only unpardonable sin; therefore, it is incumbent upon us to define and understand the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit. Since so many false concepts and teachings exist relative to the Holy Ghost, we must go to the Bible for guidance, correlating the following facts:

1. The Holy Ghost is the father of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-20; Luke 1:35).

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2. Jesus Christ baptizes men with the Holy Ghost (Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5). Being baptized with the Holy Ghost is synonymous with:

    a. Being filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4; 9:17).
    b. Gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17).
    c. Receiving the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:5-19; 10:47; 19:2).
    d. The Holy Ghost coming upon us (Acts 1:8; 19:6).
    e. The Holy Ghost being poured out upon us (Acts 2:17; 10:45).
    f. The Holy Ghost falling on us (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15).
    g. The Holy Ghost being shed on us (Acts 2:33; Romans 5:5; Titus 3:5-6).

3. Three bear record in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost—and these three are one (I John 5:7).

4. The Holy Ghost is a teacher (I Corinthians 2:13; Luke 12:12; John 14:26).

5. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 6:19). The Spirit is sent down from heaven to people (I Peter 1:12). We can be partakers of the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 6:4). The Spirit is given unto us (Romans 5:5; Acts 2:38).

6. The Holy Ghost makes people overseers of the flock—the church of God (Acts 20:28).

7. The church began on the Day of Pentecost with those present being filled with the Holy Ghost. This was evidenced by their speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance (Acts 2:1-4).

It is conclusive from the Scriptures that:

    a. The Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
    b. God is a Spirit (John 4:24).
    c. There is one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4).
    d. The Lord is that Spirit (II Corinthians 3:17).
    e. We are baptized into the body (church) by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13).
    f. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter and Spirit of truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13).

From these facts it is easy to deduce that the Holy Ghost is God, the invisible, uncreated, self-existent, eternal One who manifests Himself in the person of Jesus Christ. Therefore, when one blasphemes the Holy Ghost he blasphemes the one, true, eternal God.

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Some erroneously teach that there are three distinct, coeternal, coexistent, and coequal persons in the Godhead. However, *if* this teaching were true, Jesus exalted the Holy Ghost above the other two. In that case we could speak against two persons in the Godhead but not against the third—the Holy Ghost.

God's Word teaches us that there is only one God, with the fullness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9; 1:19). God, who is Spirit (John 4:24), is without measure, fully and entirely tabernacled in the man Christ Jesus (John 3:34; Philippians 2:5-10).

Consequently, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is blasphemy against the one, true, living God Himself. Through the providence of God He has provided the means by which we can have His Spirit, the Holy Ghost, within us. Therefore we can be full of the Holy Ghost and many great things can occur, not through the power of humans, but through the Holy Ghost. All humanity must then exercise caution lest they speak against the Holy Ghost.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

Since blasphemy against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven in this world or the world to come, it is often referred to as "the unpardonable sin," a sin for which there is no pardon, remission, or forgiveness. In order for us not to be mislead, misinformed, or deceived on the subject we need to clarify what this sin is and is not.

A. WHAT BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST IS NOT

1. *Speaking against Jesus Christ, the Son of Man (Matthew 12:31-32).* Speaking against Christ here refers to His humanity and not His divinity.

2. *Blaspheming that does not involve the Holy Ghost (Mark 3:28).* Blasphemy can be against others and other things while not directed against God Himself (I Timothy 1:13; II Timothy 3:2; Matthew 15:19).

3. *Failing spiritually, erring, or as we often term it, backsliding.* These can be forgiven and one can be restored (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; I John 5:16-17; I John 2:1-2).

4. *Rejecting a call to salvation by the Spirit*. From their own philosophy, some have declared that when a person repeatedly rejects Christ or refuses to live for Him, they have committed the unpardonable sin. There is no Scripture for this teaching, and experience has proved that

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many who rejected or refused the call of the Spirit time after time were later saved. Although this is a dangerous thing to do, rejecting God's call to salvation is not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

5. *Persecuting Christians, speaking against the church, church members, the minister, etc*. Though it is unwise and unscriptural to speak against them, it is not blaspheming the Holy Ghost.

6. *Joining a church that does not preach the full truth, accepting a baptismal formula beside the scriptural one of being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, belonging to a false cult, or other erroneous acts do not constitute blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. Those raised in an Apostolic church can go against their teaching, even denying the truth. Although all the above actions are wrong and dangerous, they do not constitute blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. These people often see the error of their way, repent, obey the gospel, and are saved.

7. *Returning to the error or false doctrine from which Christ has delivered someone*. Some receive the Word quickly and with joy but have no roots, are not established, and do not fully understand the truth (Matthew 13:20-21); because of this they may return to the place from which God delivered them. We should not judge such persons as having blasphemed the Holy Ghost. Patience with them, along with teaching and instruction, can help them correct their mistakes.

Other or similar scenarios may develop in people's lives. Before making a harsh judgment against them that they have blasphemed the Holy Ghost, we should exercise caution and remember this sin is unpardonable. We must define what the sin is and be absolutely positive about it. Declaring to people that they have committed this sin is unwise. God is the final judge of this transgression; you and I must seek to lead people to repentance, not eternally damn them.

B. WHAT BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST IS

1. *Speaking against the Holy Ghost* (Matthew 12:31-32).

2. *A sin of the tongue*. One would have to exercise the option of "speaking" against the Spirit before he would commit this sin. The power of life and death is in the tongue (James 3:1-12). Thinking, wondering, asking questions, and seeking direction, are not themselves the sin at hand. Words must be spoken *against* (in opposition, contradict, refute) the Holy Ghost.

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3. *A sin unto death (I John 5:16-17)*. Here we must distinguish between the two kinds of sins brethren can commit.

    a. A sin not unto death—This is an unrighteous act, contrary to Scripture, yet it does not constitute death, i.e., a final, irreversible, unpardonable sin. We are to pray for brethren who are caught in this snare, asking God to give them life. (See Galatians 6:1; James 5:19-20; I John 2:1-2.)

    b. A sin unto death—This is the sin against the Holy Ghost that Jesus was talking about. For those who commit this sin, it is useless to pray for them. Apparently they are doomed to the sentence of the second death even before the White Throne judgment (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14).

4. *An unpardonable sin*. Forgiveness for this sin can never be obtained in this world or the world to come. When making this statement, Jesus was not saying that other sins can be forgiven in the world to come. He was showing the finality and irreversibility of this sin. No place in time nor eternity will afford a chance of forgiveness for blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

    Pardonable, forgivable sins must be dealt with in this life only. There is no place of repentance in eternity for sins committed while in this life. Either we put sin under the blood of Jesus here and send it on ahead to the judgment, or else it follows to condemn us when we stand before God (I Timothy 5:24). Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven now or later.

5. *A sin of the enlightened*. Those who have received the Holy Ghost are the primary candidates for blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. It could be possible for a person who has never received the Holy Ghost but who has an in-depth knowledge of the Word and the working of the Holy Ghost to commit this sin. Anyone who has ever heard of these passages of Scriptures, whether versed in truth or not, would do well to refrain from speaking against the Holy Ghost. Everyone should be warned concerning this danger.

    Those ignorant of the working and acts of the Spirit, as Paul was, who speak against it in unbelief, are not in view here (I Timothy 1:13).

6. *Attributing the power of the Holy Ghost to the power of Satan*. In the

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context of Jesus' teaching, those who saw Him healing a demon-possessed person accused Him of doing this by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Jesus was casting out devils by the Spirit of God (Matthew 12:28); thus He warned them not to speak against the Holy Ghost.

Spiritual gifts are often exhibited before people, especially in the three areas of (1) tongues, (2) interpretation of tongues, and (3) prophecy (I Corinthians 12:1-11). God's Spirit is often manifested in physical demonstrations of leaping, running, or dancing in the Spirit (Acts 3:1-11). Other visible manifestations that we do not understand may also be exhibited. Attributing these acts of God's power to Satan could place us in danger of committing this sin.

We must deal with satanic forces that expose themselves, when we know and discern them as such. There is a known and distinct difference, however, between the power of God and the power of Satan. We must never attribute God's work and power to Satan! Those around Jesus even accused Him of having an unclean spirit (Mark 3:30), thereby calling the Holy Ghost and the Spirit's work an unclean thing.

Without question the Bible clearly defines the unpardonable sin. Caution, respect, and reverence should be the order of our lives when we encounter anything sacred and holy. So many, especially those who are familiar with truth, often act recklessly and irreverently around the holy, sacred things of God. May I solemnly warn you never to lose your awe, respect, and reverence toward the things of God. We have been given much, and much is required of us.

WARNINGS RELATIVE TO THE HOLY GHOST

Both the Old and New Testament sound forth clear warnings to those familiar with the work of God. Since we are seeking to retain a high level of respect and reverence toward the Holy Ghost, perhaps it is fitting for us to consider the ways in which we are *not* to treat the Spirit of God. While these are the negative aspects of our conduct, we should remember that God is pleased when we express or choose the opposite toward His Spirit.

These should serve as a warning to us how not to treat the Spirit of God. Abstaining from these unacceptable practices will place us in a position of reverence; as such, we will not blaspheme against the Holy Ghost. These are things we are not to do toward the Spirit.

NOTES:

1. **Vex the Spirit** (Isaiah 63:10)—"Vexed" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *atsab* (aw-tsab'), meaning displease, grieve, hurt, vex, wrest.

   Webster defines *vexed* as annoyed, troubled, agitated, disquieted, afflicted, much despised, much contested or discussed, brought up again and again.

2. **Tempt the Spirit** (Acts 5:9)—"Tempt" comes from the Greek word *peirazo* (pi-rad'-zo), meaning to test, endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline, assay, examine, go about, prove, try.

   Webster defines *tempt* as to try to persuade, to induce, to entice, to allure.

3. **Resist the Spirit** (Acts 7:51)—"Resist" comes from the Greek word *antipipto,* (an-tee-pip'-to) meaning to oppose, resist. (It also means to stand against, withstand.)

   Webster defines *resist* as to stand against, withstand, oppose, fend off, withstand the actions of.

4. **Quench the Spirit** (I Thessalonians 5:19)—"Quench" comes from the Greek word *sbennumi* (sben'-noo-mee), meaning to extinguish, go out. (W. E. Vine interprets this as binding the Spirit's operation in the church gathering of believers.)

   Webster defines *quench* as to extinguish, put out, still, quiet, repress.

5. **Grieve the Spirit** (Ephesians 4:30)—"Grieve" comes from the Greek word *lupe* (loo'-pay), meaning to cause sadness, heaviness, sorrow.

   Webster defines *grieve* as to give pain of mind to, afflict, cause to feel grief, destroy.

   Other translations render this word as "offend," "distress," "hurt," and "cause sorrow."

6. **Do Despite to the Spirit** (Hebrews 10:29)—"Despite" comes from the Greek word *enubrizo* (en-oo-brid'-zo), meaning to insult, do despite unto.

   Webster defines *despite* as extreme malice, violent hatred, malignity, spite, a contemptuous act, insult, injury.

   Other translations use words such as "insult," "affront," "outrage," and "mock" for "despite."

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Those who "do despite" to the Spirit have apparently joined the ranks of those who have blasphemed the Holy Ghost. They are declared to be worthy of much *sorer* (worse, severer, heavier) punishment than those under Moses' law. Study Hebrews 10:26-29; 6:4-8 in context with other truths presented in this study.

Conclusively and without question, the Holy Ghost is something to treat tenderly, speak of reverently, and act toward with the deepest of reverence. Believers should yield themselves entirely to the Spirit with which they are filled, ever seeking to be led by the Spirit. We should remove from our lives any working against, quenching, resisting, or all other acts contrary to the Holy Ghost.

REFLECTIONS

Erring believers can be restored when they commit a sin not unto death (I John 5:16-17). Those who are spiritual are to restore them in a spirit of meekness (Galatians 6:1). When an erring Christian has been restored, we have saved a soul from death and covered a multitude of sin (James 5:19-20). Backsliding, as we often call it, is not an irreversible, unpardonable position. If you are in this state you can return to God as the prodigal son did, being restored and forgiven (Luke 15:11-32). In this condition of being lost and away from the Father, you should exercise the utmost of caution. In your state of rebellion you could attribute the power of the Holy Ghost to Satan, thereby committing the unpardonable sin.

Those who blaspheme against the Holy Ghost are beyond the reach of the mercy of God, for the Spirit can no longer draw them to Christ (John 6:44). No words can describe the state or condition of a person who though yet alive has committed a sin unto death. His error has no remedy, he cannot be forgiven, he is without hope, here or in the hereafter. While this may sound harsh, it is Christ's teaching.

From Genesis 1:2, when the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters until Revelation 22:17, when the Spirit issues the last call to "come,"we read about the Holy Ghost. Nothing equals the power and miraculous working of the Spirit. I have been healed by its power, filled with the Spirit as evidenced by speaking with other tongues, and led by His invisible hand for over thirty-six years. Today I am still awed by the Holy Ghost and stand in reverence of the Spirit. May we who have tasted this heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come never fall away so that it is impossible to renew us to repentance. This was Esau's fate (Hebrews 12:16-17) and can become ours if we speak against the Holy Ghost.

NOTES:

Though it is solemn to study, often evoking fear in us, we need to acquaint ourselves with the unpardonable sin. If we live reverential lives, rendering only praise to God, we will never come into this condemnation. May this lesson guide you into right paths and away from the unpardonable sin.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 25

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

1. Define the word *blaspheme*._____.
2. List three facts about the Holy Ghost. (A) _____,
   (B)_____, (C) _____.
3. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is not (give three of the seven in this lesson):
   (A) _____, (B) _____,
   (C)_____.
4. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is: _____
   _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. Those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost can be forgiven in the next world. T_____
    F_____.
12. John told us that there are two kinds of sin. What are they?
    (A) A sin _____.
    (B) A sin not _____.
13. Was Paul a blasphemer before his conversion? _____.
    Scripture: _____.
14. Jesus was accused of casting out devils by the prince of devils. What name designates this prince? _____.
15. Give the first three warnings in this lesson relative to the Spirit:
    (A)_____.
    (B)_____.
    (C)_____.
16. Give the last four warnings relative to the Spirit.
    (A)_____.

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(B)_____.
(C)_____.
(D)_____.

17. Those who "do despite" to the Spirit of grace are worthy of _____ punishment than those under Moses' law.
18. Can erring brethren be restored? Give two verses of Scriptures. (A) _____, (B)_____.
19. What verse of Scripture records the first mention of the Spirit? _____ The last mention of the Spirit? _____.
20. Briefly define in your own words what blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is.

_____
_____
_____
_____

LESSON 26

NOTES:

THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

MATTHEW 6:1; 9-15

Originally man lived in a state of purity, free from defilement and guilt. By transgressing God's command, Adam and Eve plunged the human race into the abyss of sin. When sin entered the world through one man, it brought with it the sentence and penalty of death; now death has passed upon all people. What one man's disobedience did to us is beyond description and comprehension. You know as well as I the ravages of sin and its aftermath upon our world.

Age after age came and went without a permanent remedy for the sin problem. The law given to Moses simply revealed sin, identified it, and penalized it. Sin by the commandment (law) became exceedingly sinful (Romans 7:13). (See also verses 1-25.) It becomes evident that the law did not effectively solve the sin problem.

While the law was still in effect, Christ entered the dispensation of the law, both to fulfill the law and to provide a remedy for sin. By His death on Calvary and through His blood, we now have remission of sins. Christ came to make forgiveness of sin available and effective for all who will come to Him. By His obedience many have been made righteous; now grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 5:12-21).

All manner of sin and blasphemy (except one—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost) can be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32). If we have been born again of the water and Spirit (John 3:1-8), having obeyed Acts 2:38 and received the experience of Acts 2:1-4, we are the recipient of a divine act of God, which includes forgiveness of sins. No provident measure of God available to humanity is more needed than forgiveness.

Christ obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:12) and forgave us all our trespasses (Colossians 2:13). Now He requires that Christians extend this grace to others. After we are saved, we must forgive in the same limitless measure that we have been forgiven.

Failing to forgive carries with it severe consequences in both time and eternity. The focus of this lesson is upon our privilege and responsibility to forgive, and the outcome should we fail to do so. Forgiving others is an option only we can exercise; we are never forced to forgive.

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DEFINITIONS

Even though the terms used in this study are familiar, we should fully understand the following definitions:

- **Consequences—**Webster defines this word as (1) that which follows from any act, cause, principle, or series of actions; an event or effect produced by some preceding act or cause; a result; (2) a logical result to, conclusion; (3) connection of cause and effect.

  In the context of this lesson, this word is important. What are the results or outgrowth of an unforgiving spirit?

- **Forgiving—**Comes from the Greek word *charizomai* (khar-id'-zom-ahee), meaning to grant as a favor, gratuitously, in kindness; pardon or rescue; deliver; forgive (freely); give; grant.

  This term appears in Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 2:13; 3:13; both are interwoven in this study.

- **Forgive—**Comes from the Greek word *aphiemi* (af-ee'-ay-mee), meaning to send forth, forsake, lay aside, leave, omit, put away, remit, yield up.

  This word appears in most New Testament passages that speak of forgiveness. Jesus told us, "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). "Forgive" and "forgiven" here come from the Greek word *apoluo* (ap-ol-oo'-o), which means to relieve, release, dismiss, let die, pardon, let go, loose, put (send) away, set at liberty.

Understanding these terms will provide needed emphasis and strength to this lesson as you study or teach it.

WE NEED FORGIVENESS

It almost goes without saying that all of us need forgiveness. However, to reinforce this powerful truth in our minds and hearts, we would do well to remember how we needed forgiveness in the past. Presently we need forgiveness and will need it again in the future. Every person on the face of this earth has need of this precious commodity that God has designed to deal with the sin problem.

NOTES:

I. SINNERS NEED FORGIVENESS

Due to the original sin of Adam and Eve we have all been made sinners, both by nature and our own personal conduct (Romans 5:12-21; Psalm 51:5). To obtain freedom and release from these sins we are commanded to repent as a first step of active faith (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3; Mark 2:17; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38). When we repent (change of mind, direction, purpose, etc.), God forgives us. Of course, the initial experience of salvation also includes baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:1-4, 38; 22:16).

Forgiveness of sins, an act of graciousness only God can provide, has now been accomplished. Let us consider what our situation would be were there no such thing as forgiveness. Our repentance and seeking deliverance from sin would all be in vain. Our transgressions would still condemn us, create guilt, render us unclean, and separate us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). However, God's nature is one of grace and mercy. He knew we would need deliverance and release from the guilt of sin, and He has provided it for us through His gracious act of forgiveness.

Though we were guilty and owed a debt of sin that we could not pay, Christ forgave us. Justice demanded a penalty, but God's mercy provided pardon.

II. CHRISTIANS NEED FORGIVENESS

This statement may cause you to blush silently and divert your eyes from this statement. Nevertheless, in your heart, from experience, and from the Bible, you know it is true. No matter how much we would like to think that we are above failure, time has proven the fallacy of that lofty dream. Our Adamic nature remains, we live in the flesh, and evil is present with us even when we would do good (Romans 7:21). Without purposing to do so, not as a willful act but under the duress of temptation and discouragement, we fail. Christians are commanded not to sin; but *if* they do so, forgiveness is provided for them (Romans 6:1-2; I John 2:1-2). What a dilemma we would be in, if after we are saved no forgiveness was afforded us. Thank God, this is not true; we can be forgiven when we fail.

A. WE NEED GOD'S FORGIVENESS

Christians who fail should go to God in prayer, seeking His forgiveness. Whether we have sinned against God only or against humans, all sin is ultimately against God. We need God's forgiveness in both cases. (Study

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I John 1:7-9; 2:1-2; Proverbs 28:13; Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 15:11-32.)

B. **WE NEED MAN'S FORGIVENESS**

Any time our error involves another, regardless of what it may involve, we need to seek the forgiveness of that person. Offences will come (Luke 17:1); brethren will err (James 5:19-20); thoughts against others will arise (Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:24-26); others will become our debtors (Matthew 6:12); brethren will trespass against brethren (Matthew 18:15-17); motes and beams will be in the eyes of brethren (Matthew 7:1-5); quarrels will arise (Colossians 3:13); and faults will overtake some (Galatians 6:1). If we are the trespasser we need to repent; if we have been trespassed against we are to forgive. We not only need the forgiveness of others, but we too must have the capacity to forgive.

Understandably, from experience and the teaching of God's Word we as Christians need forgiveness. When we need it, we must be big enough to swallow our pride and ask for it, whether from God or man or both. Seventy times seven (490) times would be a lot of forgiveness to ask for and a lot to give; however, this is the biblical principle (Matthew 18:21-22).

"BUT IF YE FORGIVE NOT"
MATTHEW 6:15

This heading is the exact words Jesus used to address this topic of great importance to us. From this negative aspect of our study on forgiveness, we are brought face to face with a tremendous power within us—the ability to forgive or not to forgive. Set before us are the consequential losses and damages that we will encounter should we opt not to forgive.

Most of our preaching, teaching, and study involves the blessings of forgiving and being forgiven. In fairness to the whole of truth, it is important for us to understand the effect upon us when we do not forgive. Apparently we have a choice, according to Jesus, whether we want to forgive or whether we want to retain the transgression or debt and demand payment for it. ("Debt" as used here and in Matthew 6:12 and 18:23-35 means fault, sins, or something owed.)

Trespasses can be committed against us. Our brethren can be our debtors (owe us an apology due to sinning against us), or because of satanic influence we can falsely perceive that we have been wronged. Imaginations, high things exalting themselves, and thoughts not brought into captivity (II Corinthians 10:3-5) can cause us to develop ill

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will toward others. These things create in us a bad spirit toward others along with resentment, distance, or even a breaking of fellowship. The devil is the accuser of the brethren and he can falsely accuse our brethren to us in our imagination and thought life (John 1:6-12; Revelation 12:10).

THIS LESSON DEALS NOT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, BUT WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO YOU OR WHAT YOU PERCEIVE HAS BEEN DONE TO YOU!

From whatever source, real or imagined, that offenses arise, we have a Christian obligation and responsibility to forgive. Howbeit, Jesus left to our discretion the option of whether we want to forgive or not. On the other hand, He told us what to expect if we choose not to forgive. These I present to you.

A. **GOD WILL NOT FORGIVE US OF OUR SINS**

As pointed out earlier, we fail and need God's forgiveness. If we choose not to forgive others their wrongs, then God will not forgive us when we fail (Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:26; Luke 6:37). Shutting ourselves off from needed forgiveness places us in an unenviable position with serious consequences. We all hold the key to our own forgiveness—it is forgiving others.

B. **OUR OWN SINS ARE RETAINED**

We obtain release from our faults (Galatians 6:1), errors (James 5:19-20), and trespasses (Matthew 18:15-17; Mark 11:24-26), only when we forgive others. Having an unforgiving spirit and attitude toward our fellowman will cause our own sins to mount up against us. Every avenue is closed to us for getting rid of our sin when we refuse to forgive.

C. **REMOVES GOD'S ABILITY TO FORGIVE**

As great and powerful as God is, we can block God's forgiveness for us. He desires us to be free from the bondage of sin and the judgment it will bring upon us. However, we can tie the hands of God, so to speak, relative to His forgiving us. Forgiving others frees God to forgive us of our sins (Mark 11:24-26; Luke 6:37).

D. **OUR PRAYERS ARE AFFECTED**

Jesus' model prayer, an exemplary pattern for us to follow, involves both

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praying for forgiveness and offering forgiveness (Matthew 6:9-13). (See verse 12.) He also taught us when we pray to believe and to forgive if we have anything against anyone (Mark 11:24-26). Could it be that our faith is hindered or destroyed and our prayers go unanswered simply because we fail to forgive? Obviously the answer is yes.

E. **RELATIONSHIPS ARE DESTROYED**

When brethren have anything between them, or when one has trespassed against the other, they usually break fellowship with one another unless forgiveness comes into play. Such a condition would reveal that we are not walking in the light, and thus we stymie cleansing from sin (I John 1:7).

Husbands and wives along with other family members become alienated when they fail to forgive what another may say or do to them.

An unforgiving spirit always carries with it the consequence of broken relationships. Leaders toward leaders, ministers toward ministers, saints toward saints, and saints toward sinners must manifest a forgiving spirit, or fellowship and relationships will be destroyed. The result of this will be a hatred of the brethren, which God will judge as murder (I John 2:9-11; 3:14-18). (Study Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 18:15-22 in context.)

F. **WE DEFILE THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST**

Our bodies are the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20), or the temple of the Holy Ghost; both mean the same. Defiling the temple carries with it a preannounced destruction from God Himself (I Corinthians 3:17).

When we fail to forgive another, we create within our own heart and mind evil thoughts toward that person. Along with this, we become bitter, vengeful, angry, and hateful toward the one we refuse to forgive. Usually this leads to speaking evil of another, thus placing us in an undesirable position with God and man. Grudges develop from these situations, and we live miserable, disquieted, defiled lives. God wants us to let go of grudges (James 5:9) and put off and away from ourselves every defiling spirit and attitude (Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-15). Our hearts are affected by an unforgiving spirit, for it is from our hearts that we must forgive (Matthew 18:35). Failure to do so causes our hearts to be filled with evils that defile us (Mark 7:20-23).

G. **GOD RECALLS THE ORIGINAL DEBT**

In Matthew 18:23-35 Jesus depicted a person as having been forgiven a debt

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of ten thousand talents. It was of such great magnitude that it could never be paid, but out of compassion the creditor forgave that person of all the debt. Then that individual found another person who owed him a paltry one hundred pence, a very insignificant amount. When asked by the debtor for patience, he, without compassion, demanded payment. Because of his unforgiving spirit, his own creditor then demanded payment for the original debt. This, Christ warned us, will be our lot if we fail to forgive from our hearts those who trespass against us.

Could it be that if Christians, who have been forgiven so much, fail to forgive others, Christ will recall all their sins and demand payment?

Our only hope of salvation in the end and enjoying the bliss of heaven hinges entirely upon our willingness to forgive others. No other option available to us carries the import and responsibility as that of forgiving others.

No doubt many other things occur to us when we fail to forgive; you can list them as they come to mind. The one we have presented here should provide enough impetus for us to seek God until we can find it in our hearts to forgive.

CHOOSING TO FORGIVE

God's Word and history are replete with those who have struggled with the sin problem. Some won, while others lost, only to be the poorer for it. Those who win the battle and choose to forgive—and it is an option—become the richer for it, both now and eternally.

We as Christians have within ourselves the spiritual resources to forgive any trespass against us. We also have the power to withhold from an individual our pardon. We must remember, however, that our holding something against others does not cause God to hold it against them. They can find pardon from God, while we hold these things in our heart to our own hurt and destruction.

Those who err, trespass, and create quarrels should ask the forgiveness of those whom they wound and hurt. When we sin, we must repent or be lost! However, some people, for whatever reason never ask for forgiveness. Does this give us license to hold hatred, grudges, and ill will in our heart against them, fighting them in every way that we can? Absolutely not! God's principle and truth teach us to *forgive— period*. Regardless of whether the erring ones ever repent or not, we must forgive them or else suffer the seven consequences pointed out above. I implore you and beseech you by the mercies of the One who has forgiven you, exercise your God-given privilege—forgive.

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A. **EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO CHOSE TO FORGIVE**

As Christians, these are the ones you and I should pattern our lives after:

1. Joseph (Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21)
2. Jesus Christ (Luke 23:34)
3. Stephen (Acts 7:59-60)

Others in the Bible, along with saints you personally know, have provided you with an exemplary spirit when it comes to forgiveness; these you must follow.

B. **EXAMPLES OF THOSE WHO CHOSE NOT TO FORGIVE**

An aftermath always follows an unforgiving spirit, as you will see when you study the following people who chose not to forgive:

1. Cain (Genesis 4:1-16; I John 3:11-15)
2. Esau (Genesis 33:1-15; Obadiah 1:1-16; Hebrews 12:14-16)
3. Saul (I Samuel 18:1-30). Because of his hatred toward David, he became a classic example of how resentment toward others can develop even when they have not wronged us in any way. Let us beware of evil thoughts and imaginations toward others.
4. The elder brother (Luke 15:11-32)

Along with these is an example in Matthew 18:23-35 of those who chose not to forgive. How tragic! The thing we need most and must have—forgiveness—we sometimes withhold from others when we have the power to give it. As you have noticed, the real damage is done to those who will not forgive, not to the other person.

REFLECTIONS

Sin makes us red like crimson and scarlet in God's eyes (Isaiah 1:18). Forgiveness from Him turns these nonerasable colors into the whiteness of snow and wool. This is what forgiveness does for us internally when we forgive others. Failing to forgive brings back the scarlet and crimson to our hearts.

Forgiveness—what a word! We need it, but to retain it we must give it. God has forgiven us; now let us forgive others. Doing so reverses all the evil consequences and brings lasting blessings to our lives.

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 26

THE CONSEQUENCES OF AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

1. What does *consequences* mean? _____.
2. Define *forgiveness*. _____.
3. Who needs forgiveness? (A) _____, (B) _____.
4. Christians need _____ forgiveness and _____ forgiveness.
5. Under the topic "We Need Man's Forgiveness" name three things that arise among people. (A) _____, (B) _____, (C)_____.
6. Finish this quote found in bold letters in the lesson, "This lesson deals not with what you have done but _____ _____."
7. What are the seven consequences of an unforgiving spirit? _____ _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. Satan is the _____ of the brethren.
15. Our bodies are the _____ of the Holy Ghost.
16. Matthew 18:23-35 depicts someone as having been forgiven a debt of____ talents.
17. If someone wrongs us, never asking forgiveness, should we forgive them anyway? Yes _____ No _____.
18. Name two who chose to forgive. (A)_____, (B) _____.
19. Name two who chose not to forgive. (A) _____, (B)_____.
20. Write a short essay, in your own words, on "The Consequences of an Unforgiving Spirit." _____ _____ _____

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LESSON 27

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SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

PROVERBS 9:1-12

Proverbs 9 is an extension of chapter 8 on the subject of wisdom. The word *wisdom* is found approximately 250 times throughout the Bible. Both Testaments contain a vast wealth of material on the topic.

After extolling the greatness of wisdom in the preceding chapter, Solomon declared, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars" (Proverbs 9:1). Further instructions follow in this discourse, concluding with where wisdom began and its bountiful promises (Proverbs 9:2-12). While we will explore many facets of wisdom (but by no means all of them), the essence of our study will be on the seven pillars of the house that wisdom has built.

God, in His Word, constantly appeals to us to seek out and acquire wisdom (Proverbs 3:13; 4:5, 7; 5:1). It is valued above gold (Proverbs 16:16), and it is to be procured along with the truth (Proverbs 23:23). With God placing such emphasis and value upon this invisible commodity, we too should highly prize wisdom, seeking to obtain it.

Since the Word calls us to the acquisition and execution of wisdom, we can be assured that it is within our grasp. Anything that God asks us to do or be, we can; He will empower us to accomplish all His bidding. Since wisdom is the principal thing (first in place, time, order, or rank) for us to have, we should seek it out (Proverbs 4:7). This study is designed to equip you in establishing the seven pillars of wisdom in your life.

DEFINITIONS

- **Wisdom—**Comes from the Hebrew root word *chakam* (khaw-kamm'), meaning to be wise (in mind, word, or act), make self or show self wise, deal wisely. From this comes another Hebrew word *chokmah* (khok-maw'), which means wisdom (in a good sense), skill. In the New Testament "wisdom" comes from the Greek word *sophia* (sof-ee'-ah), meaning wisdom, either higher or lower, worldly or spiritual.

  Webster defines *wisdom* as the quality of being wise; the faculty of making the best use of knowledge, experience, understanding, etc.; good judgment, sagacity.

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- **Pillars—**Is from the Hebrew word *ammud* (om-mood'), meaning a column (as standing), a stand, a platform. It is derived from the Greek word *stulos* (stoo'-los), meaning to stiffen, support. (See I Timothy 3:15; Galatians 6:9 in conjunction with this definition.)

Because wisdom has built a house held up by seven pillars, it is essential that we understand these terms.

DIVISIONS OF WISDOM

God's Word categorizes wisdom into several divisions, all of which are important for us to understand. Although our primary focus will be upon one segment of these divisions, we should nonetheless be aware of the others.

1. **Man's Wisdom—**(I Corinthians 2:1, 4, 5, 13).

2. **Fleshly Wisdom—**(II Corinthians 1:12).

3. **Wisdom of the World—**(I Corinthians 1:20; 2:6; 3:19).

4. **Wisdom of God—**(I Corinthians 2:7; Luke 11:49; Romans 11:33).

5. **Earthly, Sensual, Devilish Wisdom—**(James 3:13-16).

6. **Wisdom That Is from Above—**(James 3:17-18).

James and Paul, both apostles, partitioned wisdom into these various divisions; each makes an interesting study.

VALUE OF WISDOM

Lest you become tempted to pass over wisdom as simply being the proper application of knowledge and relatively unimportant, you would do well to examine the value that God places upon it. Add your own personal commentary to each of the points as you study or teach them.

1. Wisdom is better than rubies (Proverbs 8:11).

2. Wisdom produces happiness in those who find it (Proverbs 3:13).

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3. Wisdom is the principal thing (Proverbs 4:7).

4. Fools die for lack of wisdom (Proverbs 10:13).

5. It is better to get wisdom than gold (Proverbs 16:16).

6. We are to buy truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding and not sell them (Proverbs 23:23).

7. Wisdom (Ecclesiastes 2:13; 7:11-12, 19; 9:16, 18; 10:10)

    a. Excels folly as far as light excels darkness.
    b. Is good with an inheritance.
    c. Is a defense.
    d. Gives life to those who have it.
    e. Strengthens the wise.
    f. Is better than strength.
    g. Is better than weapons of war.
    h. Is profitable to direct.

8. Having wisdom was essential for the seven men chosen to conduct business in the early church (Acts 6:1-8).

9. Wisdom is so important to Christians that if they lack it, they are to ask God for it (James 1:5).

10. Wisdom is valued above (Job 28:12-19):

    a. Gold of Ophir
    b. Onyx
    c. Sapphire
    d. Crystal
    e. Jewels of fine gold
    f. Coral
    g. Pearls
    h. Rubies
    i. Topaz of Ethiopia

Wisdom is valuable and important to all of us, but it is essential for those in leadership. Holy Writ introduces us to some of the great leaders and workers of the past on the basis of their wisdom. Among them are:

1. Bezaleel (Exodus 31:1-5)
2. Joshua (Deuteronomy 34:9)

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3. Solomon (I Kings 3:28; 4:29)
4. Hiram (I Kings 7:13-14)
5. Ezra (Ezra 7:25)
6. Daniel (Daniel 1:4)
7. Stephen (Acts 6:3)

Wisdom as acquired by these men is available to us today if we will apply our heart and seek it out. Wisdom holds an exalted position in the eyes of God; therefore, we should seek God diligently until He imparts it to us.

ORIGIN OF WISDOM

"Where shall wisdom be found?" was a question of the ancients as they pursued this elusive element they so needed (Job 28:12). In reply to this all-encompassing, soul-searching, heart-rending cry comes back an answer from several sources, who also do not know where to find it. Hear those who answered and their reply to this age-old question (Job 28:12-22):

1. Man doesn't know the price; it is not found in the land of the living.

2. The depth and the sea say, "It is not with me."

3. It cannot be gotten for gold or silver.

4. It cannot be *valued* with gold, onyx, or sapphire. Gold and crystal cannot *equal* it. The *exchange* of it cannot be for jewels or fine gold. The *price* of wisdom is above coral, pearls, rubies, topaz, and pure gold.

5. It is concealed from the fowls of the air.

6. Destruction and death have heard its fame, yet cannot provide it.

In answer to this quest for wisdom, God provided an answer (Job 28:23-28).

> "And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28).

Humans can only find wisdom as they begin to fear the Lord (Proverbs 9:10; Psalm 111:10). Solomon defined the fear of the Lord in this instance (Proverbs 8:13). This fear

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of God motivates us to search out His ways, learn of Him, and obey Him; then wisdom follows.

In our pursuit of wisdom, curiosity and study drive us to seek out the origin of this highly prized commodity. From where did it originate, when did it begin, how old is it, and can we find its beginning? Questions such as these prompt us to search God's Word for an answer.

This search carries us back in time, into an age before the creation of the heavens and earth, into eternity past, before the demarcation of time. After revealing wisdom's call, value, provisions, and leadership, Solomon provided insight into the earliest mention of wisdom (Proverbs 8:1-21). A close observation of Proverbs 8:22-31 dates wisdom's existence as being *before* the creation of the universe. Wisdom therefore preexisted God's creative acts—even, no doubt, the creation of angels.

Proverbs 8:22-31 depicts wisdom in such fashion that it becomes impossible to separate it from God Himself. Finding wisdom is finding God and vice versa. God and wisdom are inseparable before the creation of the universe. Although wisdom is available to us by experiential knowledge and divine impartation, originally it was by wisdom in its pristine purity that God made the worlds (Psalm 136:5; Proverbs 3:19; 8:22-31; Jeremiah 51:15). God did not acquire wisdom as a human does; He simply possessed it as part of His essential nature. For He is the only wise God (I Timothy 1:17; Jude 25). Paul addressed prayer "to God only wise" (Romans 16:27). Wisdom is of the essential nature and character of God.

This wisdom, so sought and desired by humans, has been made available and accessible to us through the incarnation of God in Christ. Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (I Corinthians 1:30). Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God (I Corinthians 1:24): "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). God, manifesting Himself in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16), has made himself available to humanity through salvation, received by being born again (John 3:1-8). The Word was in the beginning, was with God, was God, and was made flesh and dwelt among humans (John 1:1-14). By the incarnation of God in Christ, He who is wisdom in essence, and character revealed Himself to humanity, making God (thus wisdom) available and accessible to us.

Solomon in his exaltation of wisdom declared, "Whoso findeth me findeth life, . . . he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Proverbs 8:35-36). Therefore, wisdom is more than the proper use and application of knowledge. It is more than an acquisition of human ability and ingenuity. It is a fountain of life or a source of death. We can also make these statements of Jesus Christ, who, as previously pointed out, is made unto us wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30).

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For the seven pillars of wisdom to be erected in our lives we must start with fearing the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom. Following this we must be born again of the water and the Spirit (John 3:1-8; Acts 2:1-4, 38). At this juncture we are made partakers of His divine nature (II Peter 1:3-4). Now the One in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge lives in our heart by His Spirit (Colossians 2:3). In Him we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins; furthermore, He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence (Ephesians 1:7-8). Available to all believers is this spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17-23), when they have Christ, the wisdom of God in their lives (I Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 3:10). Now we can proclaim with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33).

Christ, the wisdom of God within us, now places us in a position where these seven pillars of wisdom can be manifested in our lives. Manifesting the Spirit of Christ and His attributes becomes the solemn responsibility of every saint of God. Erecting and exhibiting the seven pillars of wisdom becomes the supporting evidence that Christ lives within. One biblical principle, always applicable in this study and never to be strayed from is: "But wisdom is justified of all her children" (Luke 7:35). Nothing defines, supports, exalts, or characterizes wisdom more than her children—the seven pillars we will examine later in this study. Establish, build, and raise them up in your life if you desire to glorify God and manifest the indwelling Christ.

SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

"God is a Spirit," declared the apostle John (John 4:24). "There is one Spirit," declared Paul (Ephesians 4:4). Whence then comes the seven Spirits of God?

John on the isle of Patmos, when receiving the revelation of Jesus Christ, introduced us to the seven Spirits of God (Revelation 1:4; 4:5; 5:6). These seven Spirits are represented by three things according to John:

1. Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne (Revelation 4:5)
2. Seven horns (Revelation 5:6)
3. Seven eyes (Revelation 5:6; Zechariah 3:9; 4:10)

It is noteworthy to mention three things here. (1) These seven Spirits are before the throne. (2) These seven Spirits are sent forth into all the earth. (3) It is the Lamb (Jesus Christ) who has these seven Spirits.

In view of these facts, we need to go to the Word to find what these seven Spirits are,

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since they are sent forth into all the earth. If they are sent into the earth and emanate from the Lamb they must be available to humans. Though we could employ many terms from the Scripture to identify these seven Spirits, Isaiah seems to identify them best (Isaiah 11:1-3):

1. The spirit of the LORD (Jehovah)
2. The spirit of wisdom
3. The spirit of understanding
4. The spirit of counsel
5. The spirit of might
6. The spirit of knowledge
7. The spirit of fear

These seven Spirits are attributed to the stem of Jesse, a "Branch," which we know is Jesus Christ. No doubt these are the seven Spirits that John witnessed as being before the throne and sent into all the earth.

Today we receive the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, that Christ sent back from heaven after His ascension (John 14:26; 16:7; Acts 1:4-11; 2:1-4; 38). Upon receiving this Spirit baptism, we can be partakers of the seven Spirits of God, appropriating them unto ourselves and manifesting them to those about us. In the one Spirit (Ephesians 4:4) that baptizes us into the body (I Corinthians 12:13) are the seven Spirits of which John speaks.

Available to us through the infilling of the Holy Ghost are all the attributes of Jesus Christ. He who is wisdom personified now lives within to shed abroad in our hearts not only His love but also wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and so on. Oh, what we receive when we receive the Holy Ghost! From this experience comes the wisdom that is from above. The Holy Ghost is from heaven; thus the seven Spirits that are before the throne come into the earth through that one Spirit. Resting upon the foundation of the fear of the Lord, wisdom now erects seven pillars that will justify and support the structure.

SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

Wisdom as people most often refer to it can be acquired through time and experience by both saint and sinner. All of us need this kind of wisdom, spoken of by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 10:10 as being profitable to direct. Sages of the past have passed from generation to generation lessons and skills they have learned through trial and error. As generations build upon this wisdom, each succeeding age can become more enlightened

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than the past. While this earthly wisdom is well and good and needed by all of us, our subject has to do with the spiritual realm and what the Scriptures teach.

In this spiritual realm we find two kinds or forms of wisdom; both affect the inward person and originate from two opposite and opposing directions. Both types of wisdom affect the spirit, character, and conduct of people. We are to shun and avoid one at all costs, while we are to establish the other in our lives. James identified both kinds of wisdom, their origin, and their resulting work (James 3:13-18).

- **THE WISDOM NOT FROM ABOVE**

  This form of wisdom is:
  (1) Earthly
  (2) Sensual
  (3) Devilish

  Its attributes are:
  (1) Bitter envying
  (2) Strife

  From this bitter envy and strife emanate:
  (1) Confusion
  (2) Every evil work

  If this kind of wisdom controls our lives, we are not to glory in it, neither are we to lie, seeking to hide or cover up its existence. Shame, confession of our wrong, and repentance are in order and provide the only remedy and deliverance from this type of wisdom.

  Wisdom of this type originated in Eden when Eve saw that the fruit of the tree of knowledge was "to be desired to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6). Satan deceived Eve into thinking that if she and Adam ate of the fruit they would acquire a wisdom heretofore hidden from them. Upon surrendering to Satan's deceit, humans became candidates for this earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom; a wisdom that has wrought havoc and harm to both humans and the kingdom of God.

- **THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE**

  This form of wisdom originates from above. It is not earthly, sensual, or devilish. It does not produce confusion, evil works, envy, or strife. Only through the power of the Holy Ghost can we acquire this heavenly wisdom. When

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Christ comes into our heart, this wisdom comes also. His Spirit bears within it the seven Spirits of God (seven attributes of the one Spirit) that are sent into all the earth. By experiencing the new birth we become a recipient of this wisdom from above.

Upon our conversion, wisdom begins the work of hewing out the following seven pillars.

1. Purity

   God's Spirit is holy; it purifies our souls (I Peter 1:22), causing us to be pure. "Pure" in the original language of the Bible means clean, innocent, modest, and chaste.

   God's Word speaks of Christians as having a pure *heart* (I Timothy 1:5; I Peter 1:22), *conscience* (I Timothy 3:9), and *mind* (II Peter 3:1). God demands of us moral, mental, spiritual, and doctrinal purity. Purity is a pillar supporting and justifying our claim to wisdom.

2. Peaceableness

   Those endowed with the wisdom that is from above are peaceable people. They understand that confusion, strife, envy, and backbiting, contaminates them and harm the work of God. They also understand these biblical facts about being peaceable:

   a. Peacemakers are the children of God (Matthew 5:9).

   b. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3:18).

   c. We are to follow after things that make peace (Romans 14:19).

   d. The work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance (Isaiah 32:17).

   e. Chastening yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:8-11).

   f. We are to follow peace with all people and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

   Being at peace with ourselves, others, and God is a mark of wisdom.

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Peaceableness supports wisdom while confusion and strife destroy it.

3. Gentleness

   Gentleness is one of the nine fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Those who at one time were rough, incorrigible, unkind, and hateful, upon receiving the Spirit will become gentle. God's gentleness can make us great, just as it did David (II Samuel 22:36). Paul exhibited gentleness to the Thessalonican church as a nurse would toward children (I Thessalonians 2:7). The Word commands ministers to be gentle (II Timothy 2:24). Christians who are led by the Spirit will be gentle toward others, a sign of wisdom.

4. Easy to Be Entreated

   "Intreated" is used only this one time in the New Testament. It comes from the Greek word *eupeithes* (yoo-pi-thace'), meaning good for persuasion, compliant, easy to be entreated. Wise Christians are not obstinate, unyielding individuals unable to surrender their wills and ideas to a better one. We should be easily persuaded not to do anything wrong or evil but to do what is good, right, and holy.

   Paul was a man of great flexibility according to his own testimony (I Corinthians 9:20-22). Stubbornness is an indication we lack the wisdom from above. Saints who are easy to entreat in right things show forth Christ-like wisdom.

5. Mercy and Good Fruit

   Christians who are merciful to others obtain mercy for themselves from the Lord (Matthew 5:7). Those who refuse mercy to others will receive judgment without mercy upon their own lives (James 2:13). Read the account in Matthew 18:23-35 of what happens to the unmerciful. God has been merciful to us in so many areas; they who are partakers of His wisdom will cheerfully show mercy to others (Romans 12:8). God's Spirit within us should make us more than merciful. We should be *full* of mercy.

   James coupled mercy and good fruits together as a united entity, forming a singular pillar of support for wisdom. Upon study and observation it becomes obvious that we cannot be full of good fruits if we are not merciful. Unmerciful people do not have the capacity to render good to others who are in need. They are selfish, self-centered, unkind individuals, exacting a high level of righteousness in others while exhibiting little in their own lives. More often than not, when trouble, failure, or financial hardship comes their way,

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they long for the mercy and good fruits they withheld from others. These can not find it in their heart to do to others as they would have others do to them.

The fruit of the Spirit is in: (1) goodness, (2) righteousness, and (3) truth (Ephesians 5:9). This Spirit produces nine fruit in one's life (Galatians 5:22-23), creates in our lives the blessedness spoken of by Christ in the nine beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), and makes us candidates for an endowment of the nine spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 12:1-11). As Christians we are to be full of good fruit since fruit alone identifies the tree (Luke 6:43-44).

Wisdom that is from above is manifested through mercy and good fruit. Supporting our position as a believer filled with wisdom will be this strong, solid pillar composed of these two entities.

6. Impartiality

God, who is just, fair, and impartial to all regardless of race, creed, or color, imparts to us His nature when we are born again. Wise Christians are not filled with prejudice, divisiveness, and segmentation in their treatment and judgment of others. It is unwise for us to be partial in relationships, especially among believers.

Paul charged us to observe His instructions (study them in context, I Timothy 5:17-22), without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. James established the same policy, clearly identifying what partiality is, in his epistle (James 2:1-13).

Wisdom is evident, visible, and upheld when we conduct ourselves without respect of persons and without partiality.

7. Without Hypocrisy

Nothing distinguishes and marks a person as quickly as hypocrisy. In any area of life or in any profession, a person who professes to abide by the principles of his vocation when in reality he does not, is a "hypocrite." Hypocrisy deceives only one person—the hypocrite himself. Folly, as well as a lack of wisdom, is evident when a person is insincere.

Life's most disgusting situation is a hypocrite in the church. Folly is at its height when one takes God and His Word so lightly that he will profess something he does not possess. Wisdom motivates us to be sincere and true. Here is

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what the Scriptures have to say about hypocrisy:

a. Newborn Christians are instructed, among other things, to lay aside hypocrisies (I Peter 2:1-2).

b. Those seeking to remove a mote from another's eye while a beam is in their own eye are called hypocrites (Luke 6:41-42).

c. Many of the things the Pharisees did were good, but many of them were hypocritical. Study the things that identified them as hypocrites, seeking to avoid such conduct (Matthew 23:1-33).

d. Job spoke often of the hypocrite. Hear his warnings to them:

1. The hypocrite's hope shall perish (Job 8:13).
2. The hypocrite shall not come before God (Job 13:16).
3. The congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate (Job 15:34).
4. The innocent are stirred against the hypocrite (Job 17:8).
5. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment (Job 20:5).
6. What is the hope of the hypocrite when God takes away his soul? (Job 27:8).
7. The hypocrite in heart heaps up wrath (Job 36:13).

e. Note the final doom of the hypocrite (Matthew 24:51).

Hypocrisy is a losing game being played out on the stage of life by the unwise. They act as if they were genuine when in their hearts they know evil abides. Wisdom is *without* (free from, not with) hypocrisy. A hypocrite is an actor under an assumed character (stage player) or a dissembler. Sincerity, genuineness, and guilelessness signify that wisdom directs and controls our lives.

REFLECTIONS

Solomon, who prayed for an understanding heart, was granted wisdom beyond that of others before or after him (I Kings 3:5-28; 4:29-34). God also gave him things he did not ask for: riches, honor, and a long life. Among his three thousand proverbs (I Kings 4:32), Solomon included one on wisdom itself in Proverbs 8:1; 9:12. Wisdom, though invisible, is depicted as building a house and hewing out seven pillars to support it. James, many centuries later, revealed wisdom's support system, enumerating the seven things that characterize the wisdom that is from above. This wisdom can come only through Jesus Christ, who is made unto us wisdom.

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Wisdom excels folly as far as light excels darkness (Ecclesiastes 2:13). Folly is as easily distinguished from wisdom as night is from day. God's unchanging principle is that wisdom is justified by all her children. Wisdom is supported by seven pillars that always identify and justify it. Partaking of Christ, through the Holy Ghost, gives us access to this life giving force. Wisdom stands as a stately mansion supported by seven pillars, readily seen in the lives of those who possess it.

> **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).**

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WORKSHEET
LESSON 27

SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

1. How many pillars has wisdom hewn out? _____.
2. Define wisdom._____.
3. *Pillars*, as used in our study, means: _____.
4. Under the topic "Divisions of Wisdom," six categories of wisdom are listed. Name three of them. (A)_____, (B) _____, (C) _____.
5. We are to buy wisdom, truth, _____, and _____ and sell them not.
6. Name three things that show us how valuable wisdom is. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
7. Name three people in the Bible who had wisdom. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
8. Paul prayed, "To God only _____ ."
9. Jesus Christ is made unto us righteousness, _____ and redemption.
10. Wisdom is justified of all her _____.
11. God is a _____ (John 4:24). There is one _____ (Ephesians 4:4).
12. The seven Spirits of God are represented by what three things? (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
13. Name three of the seven spirits in Isaiah 11:1-3. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
14. The wisdom not from above is (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
15. Where envying and strife are, there is _____ and every _____work.
16. List the first three pillars of wisdom. (A) _____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
17. List the last four pillars of wisdom. (A)_____, (B)_____, (C) _____, (D) _____.
18. Blessed are the _____; they shall be called the children of God.

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19. According to Ephesians 5:9, the fruit of the Spirit is in (A)_____, (B)_____, (C) _____.
20. Hypocrisy means _____.

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WHEN WE CANNOT SEE OUR WAY

When we cannot see our way,
Let us trust and still obey;
He who bids us forward go,
Cannot fail the way to show.

Tho' the sea be deep and wide,
Tho' a passage seem denied,
Fearless let us still proceed,
Since the Lord vouchsafes to lead.

Night with Him is never night;
Where He is, there all is light.
When He calls, why delay?
They are happy who obey.

T. Kelly

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

CRAWFORD D. COON, saved and miraculously healed of an incurable disease and its crippling effect upon his body at the age of fourteen, began his ministry at sixteen years of age. For thirty-two years, since age eighteen, he has been engaged in a full-time ministry of evangelism, teaching, and pastoring with the United Pentecostal Church International.

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